

*History & Highlights of the City of Savannah's  
Council-Manager Form of Government  
1954-2004*



*Luciana M. Spracher  
2004*





*January 2004*

*Editorial Revisions February 2004*

*Prepared by:*

Luciana M. Spracher  
Bricks & Bones Historical Research  
109 West Broughton Street, #202A  
Savannah, Georgia 31401  
912.239.9720  
[www.bricksandbones.com](http://www.bricksandbones.com)

*Prepared for:*

City of Savannah  
Municipal Research Library  
City Hall  
Bull Street at Bay Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31401  
912.651.6412

***THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT INTENDED FOR LEGAL PURPOSES.***

## **CONTENTS**

A Brief History of the Establishment of Savannah's Council-Manager Form of Government	2
Biographical Notes on Savannah's City Managers	
Francis Atherton Jacocks	5
John Oliver Hall	6
Arthur A. "Don" Mendonsa	7
Picot B. Floyd	9
Michael B. Brown	10
Savannah's Administrations under the Council-Manager Form of Government	11
Research Notes	15
Highlights of Savannah's Council-Manager Government	16

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAVANNAH'S COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

In a 1937 report to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, Dr. Thomas H. Reed described a shortage of cash with which to meet the City's obligations, the result of a long time habit of overspending on the part of the City. Though the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression, Reed cited that the "City did not attempt to curtail its ordinary operating expenses" in any way. Ten years later, Reed updated the study and informed the current administration, "your predecessors adopted a budget in which budgetable receipts were overestimated and expenses underestimated."

Despite numerous warnings, the City government did not seem to make any moves to improve the financial situation. In 1950, Griffenhagen & Associates made the report which would become the impetus needed to move Savannah's municipal government successfully into the future. The Griffenhagen Report, as it is called, stressed that the local government, despite growing at a fast rate in commissions, departments, and officers, had not been overhauled since incorporation in 1790. The report outlined three major defects in the current government system which would need to be addressed before the City could begin to get out from under the financial weight: government responsibilities were not clearly defined and were often shared; authority was not placed in a way to permit effective conduct of city operations; and fundamental principles concerning the separation of legislative and executive functions and powers had been ignored.

The Griffenhagen Report recommended allowing the people to vote and select between a strong-mayor plan and a council-manager form of government (rather than the current weak-mayor system). Depending on the citizens' vote, a new City charter would then be drafted to concentrate executive authority in either a full-time strong-mayor or a full-time city manager. A further consolidation of departments and commissions would help create a more productive government.

In a 1953 follow-up, at the request of the Savannah Clearing House Association, Griffenhagen & Associates found that the City had failed to follow the most fundamental of the 1950 recommendations and was still operating "in the red," a situation the government found itself in for eighteen of the years between 1923 and 1953. The severe financial situation was the result of "a long history of deficit financing, issuance of funding bonds to pay off floating debts, refunding of maturing bonds where monies had not been provided to retire them, and other evidence of improvident financial management." This mismanagement of the City's finances reached a point of no return at the beginning of 1953 with a cash deficit of \$1.2 million.

Griffenhagen & Associates predicted that due to the bonded debt and high interest rates, the City would be bound by debt until 1982, twenty-nine years in the future:

*The City has mortgaged its future so heavily and for so far ahead as to endanger that future unless drastic steps are taken to change the trend.*

Those drastic steps would come in the reorganization of Savannah's municipal government from the weak-mayor system to a council-manager form. The local movement for change began in 1950, following the first Griffenhagen Report, when the *Savannah Morning News* ran a series of editorials on the council-manager form of government. The Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) and the League of Women Voters seized on the idea and began campaigning for a new form of government. The National Municipal League mailed 20,000 booklets outlining the council-manager system to Savannah voters so that the voters could make an educated decision in a referendum vote.

The movement met with strong opposition from the entrenched political organization, even after the referendum was held on March 28, 1951 and the city-manager system won by a landslide. The County delegation to the State Legislature held up progress on a new charter through disagreements and political infighting. To counteract the opposition and slowed momentum, a petition to obtain home rule, supported by 13,000 signatures, was presented to Savannah's City Council. Council, still clinging to the old form of government, threw out the petition as invalid. Under continued public pressure, Mayor Olin Fulmer finally named a committee of leading citizens to draw up a new charter for the City's government.

In December 1953, the Georgia State Legislature passed Savannah's new charter which provided for a council-manager form of government composed of City Council, a mayor and six aldermen, and a city manager. While the mayor would be recognized as the official head of the City government, the city manager would serve as the government's chief executive officer at the pleasure of the City Council. The charter provided the city manager with jurisdiction over all of the City's departments including the Police, Fire, Public Works, Engineer, and Electric departments. Despite this power, the manager is responsible to the mayor and aldermen for the proper administration of the government and is charged with carrying out their plans. The manager is in the position to make recommendations for new programs to the Council. However, Council's approval is necessary before they can be implemented.

With approval of the new charter by the State Legislature in December, the City Council had ninety days to hire its first city manager. On February 19, 1954, Council approved a resolution hiring Frank A. Jacocks on a month-to-month basis at an annual salary of \$15,000, effective March 1, 1954.

Jacocks immediately set out to reign in the City's spending and established a strong Finance Department, in which all departments and offices with related responsibilities were placed, under the leadership of one Finance Department head. By the end of 1955, Savannah was already starting to peek its head out of the "red" columns, ending the year with a \$20,731 budget surplus. However, it would still be several years before the City ended with a cash surplus. Once on the plus side, Savannah has never fallen back into the "red."

Jacocks continued to consolidate departments, streamlining functions in order to provide better services at an overall savings. In the years following the first city manager's efforts, the City has been allowed to expand with new departments and programs, offering a wide array of services to Savannahians. This growth was made possible by the initial reduction and reorganization of the government which enabled the City a chance to catch its breath and re-evaluate its position.

In July 1955, Representative Frank S. Cheatham, Jr. and Charles F. Wood, former president of the Jaycees, traveled to Seattle to present Savannah's bid for the All-America City Award. In January 1956, the City was officially presented with the award (one of eleven recipients chosen from a pool of 137 cities), sponsored by the National Municipal League and *LOOK Magazine*, "for outstanding citizen initiative" in improving Savannah's political situation.

The people's will in the successful restructuring of Savannah's government was proclaimed as:

*Modern-day proof of the inherent strength of our representative democracy . . . in which the people acting in concert, can make their government anything they really want it to be.*

---

*Chapter Sources*

Cheatham, Frank S., Jr. "'Savannah Story' as it Will Be Presented in Competition to Choose 'All-America City'," (1955). All-America City Files, Municipal Research Library, Savannah, Georgia (here after, MRL).

"The Wired Congratulations When City Won '55 Award," *Savannah Morning News* (here after SMN) (20 Mar 1969). All-America City Files, MRL.

Grant, Jim. "'Savannah Story' Related In Detail by Cheatham and Wood Before All-America Jury," (27 Jul 1955). All-America City Files, MRL.

"Proceedings of Council, 19 Feb 1954." All-America City Files, MRL.

*Reports of Griffenhagen & Associates for 1950 and 1953, and Dr. Thomas S. Reed for 1937 and 1947.* Savannah: City Manager John O. Hall, reprint 1962. SAV.CM.1962-001, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

"Savannah-Charter Amended, No. 501," Georgia Laws 1953. All-America City Files, MRL.

Sellers, Beryl. "Manager Confronted by Loose Financial System," SMN (18 Mar 1958), B4:3.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SAVANNAH'S CITY MANAGERS

### **FRANCIS ATHERTON JACOCKS**

*1 March 1954 to 31 July 1959*

Frank A. Jacocks effectively became Savannah's first city manager on March 1, 1954, hired by Savannah's City Council at an annual salary of \$15,000. He was selected for the brand-new post from a pool of one-hundred applications.

He was born on March 21, 1908 to Tom Baker Jacocks of Tarboro, North Carolina. Jacocks graduated from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering (B.S.E.E. 1932) and a Master of Science degree in Public Health (M.S.P.H. 1941). His early career was spent as an engineer with the Edgecombe County Works Progress Administration at Tarboro (1932-1935); as an instrument man with the North Carolina State Highway Commission at Raleigh, specializing in bridge and road location work; and as a public health engineer with the North Carolina State Board of Health (1938-1942). In 1942, Jacocks joined the United States Public Health Service and was placed in charge of malaria and typhus control for seven southern states before being sent to Egypt as a sanitation officer. He returned to the States in 1946 to become director of the Division of Sanitation for the Charlotte Health Department in North Carolina. In 1948, Jacocks became Rock Hill, South Carolina's city manager, followed in 1950 as city manager of Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Jacocks' five-year tenure as Savannah's city manager was marked by the initial reorganization and tightening of the municipal government under the new council-manager form of government. Major innovations initiated by him included: the installation of the IBM system, which became a model for other cities; a new pension plan giving employees the opportunity to be covered by Social Security; and publication of the City's Annual Report through the local newspaper, making it available to the general public for the first time. He resigned in July 1959 to return to the United States Public Health Service as a sanitary engineer. Jacocks indicated that his main reason for returning to his former job was for better retirement benefits.

---

#### *Chapter Sources*

"Alumni Records-Francis Atherton Jacocks, Sr." General Alumni Association, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

"F. A. Jacocks Named City Manager," SMN (14 Jan 1954), 28:1.

Lowe, Dorothy. "Resignation Goes To Council Today," *Savannah News Press* (here after SNP) (31 Jul 1959), Biography File-"J," Georgia Room, Bull Street Branch, Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Counties Public Library System, Savannah, Georgia (here after CELB).



***JOHN OLIVER HALL***  
***28 September 1959 to 14 August 1962***

John O. Hall was born in Bentonville, Arkansas on June 4, 1914. He was reared in Nowata, Oklahoma where he later became the nation's youngest city manager at the age of twenty-three following his 1936 graduation from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in Government.

In 1952, Hall traveled to Ecuador with the Federal government's Technical Assistance Program, followed by a stay in Uruguay to study their administrative system. In 1956, he went to Pakistan to serve as the associate advisor for the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Public and Business Administration at the University of Karachi. Before coming to Savannah, Hall served as city manager to four cities, Pueblo, Colorado, and Muskogee, Nowata, and El Reno, Oklahoma.

During his three-year tenure as Savannah's city manager, Hall established the new posts of budget officer, sanitation department head, and water department head. He placed great emphasis on improving city employee conditions through salary raises and improved working conditions. Hall reduced street cleaning costs by \$140,000 a year and improved the City's equipment and physical plant.

In 1962, Hall resigned his position in Savannah to become the director of overseas programs for the University of Pittsburgh, where he later earned a doctorate degree in Higher Education (1968). During the remainder of his career he worked as a public administration consultant before retiring in Austin, Texas.

---

*Chapter Sources*

Flanders, Joe. "City Manager Hall Reviews First Year," SMN (28 Sep 1960). VF-Savannah-Politics and Government, 1950-1959, CELB.

"Hail and Farewell," SMN (25 Sep 1959). VF-Savannah-Politics and Government, 1950-1959, CELB.

"John O. Hall Personnel File." Box 1510-001-58, MRL.

"Obituaries for Dec. 5, 1998-John Hall," SMN (5 Dec 1998). Web posted, <http://www.savannahnow.com> (Jan 2004).

"Oklahoman Named New City Manager," SMN (25 Sep 1959), 14B:9.

**ARTHUR A. "DON" MENDONSA**  
***13 June 1962 to 1 May 1967***  
***3 September 1971 to 31 December 1994***

Arthur A. Mendonsa, commonly known as Don, was born on April 5, 1928. In 1952, Mendonsa graduated from Emory University with a Bachelor of Arts, followed by a master's degree in City Planning from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1954. He worked with the Planning Commission of Charleston, South Carolina for a year before becoming director of planning for Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia. In 1960, he came to Savannah as the executive director of the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). While at MPC, he drew up the first zoning rules and regulations for the City, the same in effect when he retired from Savannah government in 1994.

In 1962, Mayor Malcolm Maclean encouraged Mendonsa to leave MPC to take over the role of city manager vacated by John Hall. He held both positions simultaneously while MPC found a new executive director. Mendonsa resigned as city manager in 1967 following a disagreement and increased opposition with City Council under Mayor J. Curtis Lewis.

Mendonsa then worked at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government and then with the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners as the chief administrative officer for the county, providing services to 400,000 people. In 1971, following Picot Floyd's resignation as Savannah's city manager (see following page for more information of Floyd), Mayor John Rousakis asked Mendonsa to come back to Savannah as the city manager. This began a twenty-one year working relationship between Mendonsa and Rousakis often described as "ying and yang," a perfect combination of talents, energy and cooperation.

Mendonsa worked diligently toward the improvement of his department heads and staff. When he became manager in 1962, only one department head had a college degree of any kind, by the time he retired almost all heads had a master's degree. In 1979, the International City Management Association awarded him the Outstanding Management Innovator Award for his development of the Responsive Public Services Program (RPSP), the Resource Management and Control System (RMAC), the Integrated Budgeting System, and the Modular Pay Plan. The first three programs worked together to integrate budgeting, planning, scheduling, work measurement, and effectiveness evaluation to provide better services for Savannah residents at a reduced cost.

After serving a total of twenty-eight years as Savannah city manager, Mendonsa is credited with the \$7.5 million River Street Renewal project, drafting of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and Savannah's largest annexation of twenty-five square miles taking in Savannah's Southside neighborhoods. Perhaps Mendonsa's greatest accomplishment was the awarding of a \$10 million grant from the Casey Foundation which helped establish Savannah's

Youth Futures Authority.

During his tenure as Savannah's city manager, he continued to work with the Institute of Local Government (renamed the Carl Vinson Institute) as an assistant professor (1967-1979), and following his retirement he provided them with consultant services and filled the role of Public Service Associate (1995-1998). For the institute's use, Mendonsa authored *Simplified Management for Local Government*, and *Helping Children Become Successful Adults: A Planning Manual for Communities* (1998). The Georgia City-County Management Association (GCCMA) sponsor an annual educational program for Georgia teachers to learn more about local government. Following Mendonsa's death, the course was renamed the Don Mendonsa Local Government Seminar.

---

*Chapter Sources*

"Arthur A. "Don" Mendonsa," (n.d.). Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

"Arthur A. Mendonsa Personnel File." Box 1510-001-58, MRL.

"TCMA 1979 Annual Award Winners," *Public Management* (Sep 1979), 14-16.

"Management Innovations for the City of Savannah, Georgia, 1974-1979," (1979). SAV.CM.1970-001, Box 0120-020-2, MRL.

Stakes, Mary, Director of Don Mendonsa Local Government Seminar. Telephone conversation with the author (12 Feb 2004).

Swann, Amy A. "Mendonsa Leaving Legacy After 28 Years," SMN (31 Dec 1994), 1A:3.

**PICOT B. FLOYD**  
**1 May 1967 to 31 May 1971**

Picot B. Floyd, the only native of Savannah to serve as city manager, was born on August 18, 1931 to Marnaduke H. Floyd. After attending local grade schools, he graduated from St. Mary's College in Baltimore, Maryland. He later received a master's degree from George Washington University.

Before becoming Savannah's city manager, Floyd served as: a member of the University of Georgia Institute of Government (now Carl Vinson Institute of Government); assistant city manager of Savannah (under Hall); assistant city manager of Alexandria, Virginia; director of the United States Office of Economic Opportunity programs in Mississippi and Alabama; a *Savannah Morning News* reporter; and an instructor at Benedictine Military Academy in Savannah, Georgia.

Floyd was hired as city manager by Mayor J. Curtis Lewis' administration in 1967 following the resignation of city manager Don Mendonsa. Under Floyd's four-year tenure he: successfully negotiated the first agreement in the Southeast between a municipal government and a labor union; developed a strong Model Cities program which resulted in more than \$5 million in Federal grants to the City; successfully implemented three major Urban Renewal projects representing a future investment of \$20 million; implemented the Savannah Pollution Abatement program; and helped develop plans for the Savannah Civic Center. Floyd's measures began the downtown revitalization and redevelopment that would characterize Savannah and the City's services and programs for the rest of the twentieth century.

After four years as Savannah's manager, Floyd resigned in 1971 to become a senior vice-president of the Technology Application Program (TAP) of the International City Management Association in Washington, D.C. His career went on to include: senior vice-president of Public Technology, Inc., a nonprofit group providing technical information to municipalities; city manager of Clearwater, Florida; and chief executive officer of Hillsborough County, Florida, which included the City of Tampa.

---

*Chapter Sources*

Haerberle, Kathy and Don Wilson. "City Manager Floyd Resigns His Position," SMN (13 May 1971), 1A:6.

"Picot B. Floyd Personnel File." Box 1510-001-30, MRL.

***MICHAEL B. BROWN***  
***January 1, 1995 to Present***

Michael Brown, a native of Beaufort, South Carolina, was chosen in October 1994 to replace retiring city manager Mendonsa. At the time he was serving as city manager of Columbus, Georgia. Brown was selected in part for his previous experience with Savannah's government, having served as assistant city manager and chief of the Management and Financial Services Bureau from 1980 to 1989 under Mendonsa. His knowledge and track record working with the Georgia State Legislature further pushed him ahead of the pack in the Council's search for a new manager.

Brown holds a bachelor's degree in Government and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Virginia and has been working with municipal governments since graduating in 1975. After interning with the city manager of Charlottesville, Virginia, Brown became city manager of Mount Pleasant, Tennessee, a town of about 4,000 people at the time (1975-1976). He left Mount Pleasant to assume the role of assistant city manager for Stratford, Connecticut, and was elevated to city manager for the town of 50,000 in 1978. Brown then served as one of the assistant city managers in Savannah for eight years before becoming city manager of Columbus, Georgia, the second largest city in Georgia, after Atlanta, in 1989.

During his tenure as Savannah's city manager the City: hosted the National Trust for Historic Preservation annual conference; received Certified Local Government Status; and was the recipient of a \$1 million Federal grant for revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods.

---

*Chapter Sources*

"Assistant Manager for City Selected," (n.d.). Personnel File-Michael Brown, Human Resources Department, Savannah, Georgia.

Goyer, John. "City Official Brown Looking Forward to Assignment Here," SMN (24 Nov 1980). Personnel File-Michael Brown, Human Resources Department, Savannah, Georgia.

"Michael Brown Joins IG Board of Directors," (n.d.). City Manager's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Swann, Amy A. "Council Votes to Hire Brown," SMN (28 Oct 1994), 1A.

## SAVANNAH'S ADMINISTRATIONS UNDER THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

### ***121<sup>ST</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 26 January 1953 to 24 January 1955***

***Olin F. Fulmer, mayor***

Peter R. Nugent, chairman of council

A. L. Karp, vice-chairman

A. A. Thomas, mayor pro tem

Dan J. Sheehan, mayor designate

Dan F. Bevill

J. W. Fitzgerald

Jack King (from 10 Jul 1953)

David F. Knight

J. Clyde Mixon (resigned 27 Nov 1953)

Charles J. Musante

Walter H. Saffold

W. Hunter Saussy (resigned 6 Jun 1953)

Troy L. Stanfield (from 30 Dec 1953)

W. Coakley Thompson

### ***122<sup>ND</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 24 January 1955 to 21 January 1957***

***W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr., mayor***

Ellison R. Cook, III, mayor pro tempore

Henry B. Brennan

C. Harold Carter

Marion L. DeWitt

John J. Rauers

Kayton Smith

### ***123<sup>RD</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 21 January 1957 to 6 October 1958***

***W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr., mayor***

Ellison R. Cook, III, mayor pro tempore (resigned 22 Nov 1957)

Henry B. Brennan

C. Harold Carter

Marion L. DeWitt

Malcolm R. Maclean (from 22 Nov 1957)

John J. Rauers

Julius Jay Shoob (from 13 Sep 1957)

Kayton Smith (resigned 12 Sep 1957)

### ***124<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 6 October 1958 to 1 October 1962***

***W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr., mayor (resigned 1 Aug 1960)***

***Malcolm R. Maclean, mayor (from 1 Aug 1960)***

Malcolm R. Maclean, mayor pro tempore (until 1 Aug 1960)

Henry B. Brennan, mayor pro tempore (1 Aug 1960-13 Dec 1961)

C. Harold Carter, mayor pro tempore (from 13 Dec 1961)

John Wright Carswell (from 12 Aug 1960)

J. Thomas Coleman, Jr. (from 13 Dec 1961)

Marion L. DeWitt (resigned 7 Feb 1962)

Louie M. Nunn (from 7 Feb 1962)

John J. Rauers

Julius Jay Shoob (from 13 Sep 1957)

**125<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 1 October 1962 to 3 October 1966**

**Malcolm R. Maclean, mayor**

C. Harold Carter, mayor pro tempore (resigned 16 Jun 1965)

John J. Rauers, mayor pro tempore (from 16 Jun 1965)

John J. Rauers, chairman of council (until 16 Jun 1965)

John Wright Carswell

Louie M. Nunn

J. Thomas Coleman, Jr.

Julius Jay Shoob

Robert J. Cummings (from 23 Jun 1965)

**126<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 3 October 1966 to 5 October 1970**

**J. Curtis Lewis, mayor**

Benjamin M. Garfunkel, mayor pro tempore

Edward A. Perkins, chairman of council

Stephen F. Browne, vice-chairmen (resigned 4 Oct 1968)

William T. Gaudry

J. Marcus Stubbs

Joseph R. Myatt (from 4 Oct 1968)

D. Boyd Yarley, Jr.

**127<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 5 October 1970 to 7 October 1974**

**John P. Rousakis, mayor**

Frank P. Rossiter, mayor pro tempore

Bowles C. Ford, chairman of council

Leo E. Center, vice-chairman

F. M. Chambers

C. Esbey Thompson

H. C. Morrison

**128<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 7 October 1974 to 2 November 1978**

**John P. Rousakis, mayor**

Frank P. Rossiter, mayor pro tempore

H. C. Morrison, chairman of council

Leo E. Center, vice-chairman

Bowles C. Ford

W. Brooks Stillwell, III

Roy L. Jackson

***129<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 2 November 1978 to 4 October 1982***

***John P. Rousakis, mayor***

Frank P. Rossiter, mayor pro tempore (elected at large)  
H. C. Morrison, chairman of council (5<sup>th</sup> District)  
Leo E. Center, vice-chairman (elected at large)  
Leon A. Chaplin (2<sup>nd</sup> District)  
Roy L. Jackson (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
Harris K. Lentini (6<sup>th</sup> District)  
Creighton L. Rhodes (3<sup>rd</sup> District)  
W. Brooks Stillwell, III (4<sup>th</sup> District)

***130<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 4 October 1982 to 6 October 1986***

***John P. Rousakis, mayor***

Frank P. Rossiter, mayor pro tempore (elected at large, died in office 10 Jan 1983)  
Harley C. Morrison, chairman of council (3<sup>rd</sup> District)  
Leo E. Center, vice-chairman, mayor pro tempore (from 20 Jan 1983, elected at large)  
Otis S. Johnson, vice-chairman (2<sup>nd</sup> District)  
W. Brooks Stillwell, III, vice-chairman (from 20 Jan 1983, 4<sup>th</sup> District)  
Floyd Adams, Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
Walter C. Corish, Jr. (from 20 Jan 1983)  
Robert "Robbie" Robinson (5<sup>th</sup> District)  
George A. Zettler (6<sup>th</sup> District)

***131<sup>ST</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 6 October 1986 to 2 January 1992***

***John P. Rousakis, mayor***

Leo E. Center, mayor pro tempore (elected at large, resigned 1 May 1990)  
Harley C. Morrison, chairman (3<sup>rd</sup> District, resigned 1 Aug 1990)  
Otis S. Johnson, vice-chairman (2<sup>nd</sup> District, resigned 15 Jul 1988)  
W. Brooks Stillwell, III, vice-chairman (elected at large)  
Floyd Adams, Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
James R. Barker (3<sup>rd</sup> District, from 23 Aug 1990)  
Dana Braun (elected at large, from 17 May 1990)  
Willie E. Brown (2<sup>nd</sup> District, from 22 Sep 1988)  
Clifford Hardwick, III (5<sup>th</sup> District, from 8 Mar 1990)  
Robert "Robbie" Robinson (5<sup>th</sup> District, died in office 18 Dec 1989)  
Elizabeth M. Sheehan (4<sup>th</sup> District)  
George A. Zettler (6<sup>th</sup> District)



***132<sup>ND</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 2 January 1992 to 31 December 1995***

***Susan S. Weiner, mayor***

Floyd Adams, Jr., mayor pro tempore (elected at large)

Dana Braun, chairman (elected at large)

Elizabeth M. Sheehan, vice-chairman (4<sup>th</sup> District)

Ellis P. Cook (3<sup>rd</sup> District)

Gwendolyn P. Goodman (2<sup>nd</sup> District)

Clifford Hardwick, III (5<sup>th</sup> District)

David Jones (1<sup>st</sup> District)

Judith L. Ross (6<sup>th</sup> District)

***133<sup>RD</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~2 January 1996 to 31 December 1999***

***Floyd Adams, Jr., mayor***

Ellis P. Cook, mayor pro tempore (3<sup>rd</sup> District)

Gwendolyn P. Goodman, chairman (2<sup>nd</sup> District)

Pete A. Liakakis, vice-chairman (elected at large)

Courtney Sprague Flexon (4<sup>th</sup> District)

Gary R. Gebhardt (elected at large)

Clifton Jones, Jr. (5<sup>th</sup> District)

David Jones (1<sup>st</sup> District)

George R. Zettler (6<sup>th</sup> District)

***134<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION ~ 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2003***

***Floyd Adams, Jr., mayor***

Ellis P. Cook (3<sup>rd</sup> District)

Courtney Sprague Flexon (4<sup>th</sup> District)

Gwendolyn P. Goodman (2<sup>nd</sup> District)

Edna Branch Jackson (elected at large)

Clifton Jones, Jr. (5<sup>th</sup> District)

David Jones (1<sup>st</sup> District)

Pete A. Liakakis (elected at large)

Tony Thomas (6<sup>th</sup> District)

## RESEARCH NOTES

The following time line of Savannah's city-manager government highlights represents research of the holdings of the Municipal Research Library (MRL), the Chatham-Effingham-Liberty County Public Library (a.k.a. Live Oak Libraries), Bull Street Branch, Georgia Room (CELB), and the Georgia Historical Society (GHS). The MRL records consulted include City of Savannah Personnel Records, City Manager Records, Annual Reports, and State of the City Addresses. The CELB sources consulted include *Savannah Morning News* articles and indexes, and vertical and biography clipping files. The GHS sources utilized include vertical and biography clipping files.

Each year in the time line has a footnote citing the sources used. The various types of sources (reports, speeches, articles, etc.) were used to complement each other, however not all types were available for every year. One accomplishment has been chosen for each year as a highlight and is set in bold-faced type.

Photographs of interest found during the research process were noted following the item. There are portraits of all the former city managers and mayors in the upper rotunda of City Hall. Time did not allow for a direct effort to seek out photographs of specific events and projects once they were identified, however there are several publicity photographs of Don Mendonsa and the Police Department in the MRL's City Manager Records (copies included in research binders).

Due to the great volume of material relating to the past fifty years of Savannah's government, the last five years were not reviewed thoroughly. However, the "Citizens' Report" prepared annually by the Public Information Office should supply enough information for these years. If not, the *Savannah Morning News* is available from 1998 to the present through the news archive online at <http://www.savannahnow.com>.

Luciana M. Spracher  
7 January 2004

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF SAVANNAH'S COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT**

**1954<sup>1</sup>**

**On March 1, 1954, Savannah officially adopted the council-manager form of city government, calling for the mayor and aldermen to be elected by and responsible to the voters for all the activities of the city government, and a city manager, professionally trained, who executes and administers the decisions of the mayor and aldermen and is responsible to them. Additionally, the city manager must submit an annual budget for the mayor and aldermen's approval and adoption, and once it is adopted the city manager can then put the program into effect in terms of services and improvements. Frank A. Jacocks was chosen by the Council to be the first city manager of Savannah.**

Jacocks established rule of ten days sick leave for city employees and a Municipal ordinance establishing a uniform policy for sick leave and vacations of employees was approved by City Council.

The Mayor's annual report indicated that the City lived within its income during the previous year and reduced the deficit of the past year from \$1,226,000 to \$497,310.

Jacocks planned a survey of job classification of all city employees.

Jacocks presented a proposed budget for 1955 of \$4.5 million for operations plus \$657,000 for outlays; he described the budget as an absolute "minimum one" and stressed that "if money could be made available so that quantity purchasing could be accomplished and prompt payments made, an overall savings of ten percent can be realized."; "New equipment purchased, properly maintained, with a fixed policy of trading, would do much to reduce the cost of operation, thereby resulting in a savings of the city."; "It is firmly believed that the City should get itself on a better financial basis. The consideration of any or all of these items would be a basis for making the money available to secure savings. . ."

W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr., of the Citizens Committee, was elected mayor and his administration retained Jacocks as city manager.

Two changes in the city manager charter were drafted and brought before the January 1955 session of the General Assembly. The changes brought the chairman of the Board of Tax Assessors and the manager of the auditorium and stadium under the control of the city manager

---

<sup>1</sup> "1955 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1955, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; SMN Index 1954, (citations 14 Jan 1954, 28:1; 3 Mar 1954, 20:1; 30 Mar 1954, 2:3; 15 Apr 1954, 28:1; 4 May 1954, 22:5; 29 Jul 1954, 32:3; 24 Nov 1954, 20:1; 15 Dec 1954, 28:1; 16 Dec 1954, 32:1; 23 Dec 1954, 24:1); "Mayor Gives Final Report on Savannah," SMN (21 Jan 1955), 32:1.

(rather than under the direct control of the mayor and council), and the option of a hearing for any city manager who was fired, allowing a fired manager an opportunity to air the reasons of his dismissal by the City Council.

Upon leaving the office in January 1955, Mayor Olin Fulmer outlined the achievements of his administration including the: creation of the traffic engineers' office; and removal of the dilapidated City Market building and its replacement with a private parking facility.

## **1955<sup>2</sup>**

W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr. was inaugurated as Mayor of Savannah in January.

The City government eliminated the prior year's deficit and accumulated a surplus of \$20,731.85, despite 1953's deficit of more than \$479,000 and 1954's deficit over \$392,000. The surplus was the result of substantial savings in the operations of the City coupled with increased municipal income obtained through fairer tax collection methods and modern purchasing methods.

**The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) was organized in 1955 to combine programs of the Savannah City Technical Planning Board, the Chatham County Planning Board, and the Metropolitan Traffic Commission. The twelve members of the commission are appointed for three year overlapping terms and serve without compensation. MPC is a recommendatory board only, serving the City and the County, with an annual budget financed jointly by the two. MPC is responsible for devising plans and programs for the physical development of the community. To this end, the commission studies population trends, economic trends, land-use patterns, physical development trends, and other pertinent matters that are required for effective planning. The commission translates the findings from these studies into plans and programs, submitted for consideration to the governing bodies of the City and County.**

The Federal government approved a 636-acre Urban Renewal Program implementing MPC's plan to improve specific areas of Savannah through slum clearance and redevelopment where necessary, rehabilitation of slum buildings that are sound, and conservation of all that is desirable. Urban Renewal Project I began in July, when the Council submitted an application for Project Planning Funds to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, and received

---

<sup>2</sup> "Administration of City 'As We Judge Best' Pledged by Mayor," SMN (25 Jan 1955), 20:4; "1956 Annual Report," (Sep 8 Apr 1957), Section C, CELB-VF-Savannah-Politics and Government-1950-1959; "1955 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1955, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; "1965 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1965, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; "Cupstid Named To \$8,500 City Fiscal Post," SMN (5 Mar 1955), 20:5; "IBM System To Be Placed in City Hall," SMN (28 May 1955), 18:1.

\$75,000. The 636-acre tract on the Westside was designated as the area for the initial of study of conservation and rehabilitation potential.

Major capital improvements to the sewer system in 1955 included: completion of the West Side Sewer System, at a cost of about \$380,000; installation of 31,000 feet of new sewer lines; completion of two new pumping stations; 165,000 feet of water line, 55 new hydrants, and 1,200 new water meters added to water system; and plans completed for new sanitary sewer facilities for Olympus-Dale Terrace, Chippewa Terrace, Paradise Park, Mayfair, Cresthill Gardens, and Halcyon Bluff neighborhoods.

City Manager Jacocks established the Department of Finance with Thomas O'Neal Cupstid named the first Director of Finance. The new department was an example of Jacocks attempts to consolidate as much as possible to control government spending.

A new IBM system was installed at City Hall with an estimated savings of \$30,000 in salaries. The IBM equipment handled city water bills, tax bills and financial accounting in general. The new system helped the City Manager maintain a more up-to-date financial picture, allowing a current balance to be arrived at in five days as opposed to 20 days with the old method.

### 1956<sup>3</sup>

**Dr. George H. Gallup, president of the National Municipal League, presented the "All America City" award, of the League and *LOOK Magazine*, to Mayor W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr. and praised Savannah's "persistent" citizen efforts. During the televised program, Gallup said the council-manager form of government of Savannah belonged to the people and not to any political group.**

The City established the new post of Personnel Technician.

The City billing system was switched over to an IBM system, improving efficiency and producing better control over billing, faster figures, and a significant savings in cost.

In 1956, a special training program for city employees began, resulting in certificates presented by the city manager (picture in 1956 Annual Report). The program was the first phase of an in-

---

<sup>3</sup> "All America Award Made By Gallup," SMN (7 Jan 1956), 16:6; SMN Index 1956, (citations 25 May 1956, 36:3; 20 Jul 1956, 32:4); "Mayor Makes Report On His Administration," SMN (22 Jan 1957), 22:3; "City Plans Training Program," SMN (5 Sep 1956), 22:1; "1956 Annual Report," *Savannah Evening Press* (here after SEP) (8 Apr 1957), Section C, CELB-VF-Savannah-Politics and Government-1950-1959; "Mayor Raps Papers, County in Describing Plans for 1956," SMN (24 Jan 1956), 24:2; "City Financial Gain Reported By Auditors," SMN (29 May 1956), 26:6.

service training program, designed to increase efficiency and supervisory leadership of city employees, and was an expansion of the city manager's policy of providing top-level training through staff meetings. The course was designed to improve the relationship between city employees and the general public; subjects addressed included human relations, public relations, city organization, and city programs.

Savannah's Recreation Commission constructed the Sophronia Tompkins swimming pool, answering a long-felt need for a facility for Savannah's African American community. It was named in honor of one of Savannah's most prominent African American school teachers.

A fine arts room was established in the new library annex of the Savannah's Public Library on Bull Street. The 36<sup>th</sup> Street building, behind the main library building, was purchased in 1955 and opened in 1956.

The Department of Urban Renewal was established on March 1, 1956 and work began with basic field studies required for the development of the Renewal Plan including Land Use Surveys and Family Income and Composition Surveys. In November, the planning consultant began a visual presentation of the existing physical conditions of the area, preparing maps to form the basis of the preliminary planning of the proposed re-uses of the area. The first area selected, the Savannah-West Broad Street Urban Renewal Area was one of the largest in the country at the time. Mayor Mingledorff expressed Savannah's substandard housing problem in a speech to the Exchange Club, "Savannah has between eleven and fourteen thousand substandard houses. . . . We will never correct Savannah slums by tearing down one slum dwelling and building one public housing unit. The Urban Renewal Program goes far beyond just slum clearance. It is an opportunity to restore what is good, tear down what is bad. Re-plan for better use the entire area."

The Minimum Standards Housing Ordinance was adopted in 1956 and scheduled to go into effect in early 1957. The ordinance provided minimum housing standards including living space, sanitary facilities, and admittance of air and light into a dwelling unit. Originally drafted by the Savannah Real Estate Board, the ordinance was studied and revised by the Chatham County Board of Health.

The accumulated deficit of \$389,856.38 (as of December 31, 1954) was "completely eliminated" during 1955 and the city ended 1955 with an "operating surplus" of \$27,152.41.

#### **1957<sup>4</sup>**

In January, the Mingledorff administration began a second term.

(Photo of Mayor and Aldermen taking the oath of office, SMN (22 Jan 1957), 22:3, taken by Savannah Camera Company)

A new information and complaint desk was set up at City Hall in the corner of the rotunda and staffed by Mrs. Ann Salsburg Hancock. The desk handled complaints, questions, and directed people to the right department for their issues.

"By taking all complaints at one desk, we should be able to pin-point our trouble spots and to insure that all complaints will receive prompt action."-City Manager Jacocks

(Photo by Jim Bisson, "New City Hall Complaint Desk Proving to Be Popular Facility," SMN (9 May 1957), 36:6)

A bill providing for a four-year term for Savannah's mayor and aldermen was sent to the State Legislature. The previous two-year term was criticized as too short for an administration to carry out programs, and some non-elective officials felt they did not have any degree of permanency in their jobs with the Mayor and Council possibly changing every two years.

Since the beginning of 1954, and operation of the government under a city manager, the City's assets increased year by year for a total of \$280,416.96, and liabilities decreased by \$515,687.68.

Capital improvement projects during 1957 put the City in a deficit of \$292,773. However, the deficit was erased by the accumulation of a surplus account in 1955 and 1956, allowing the City to end 1957 with a surplus of \$8,233.97.

On December 13, 1957, the City opened the first municipally-owned parking lot, adjacent to the Telfair Academy in time to alleviate Christmas season parking problems.

**The City completed plans for a multi-million dollar Urban Renewal Program, with preliminary plans for projects No. 1 and No. 2 approved by Council, and acquisition and clearance of land expected to begin in the Fall of 1958.**

Savannah voters approved a \$2,925,000 bond issue, allowing for a capital improvement program of \$1,200,000 for paving projects, \$1,000,000 for storm and sanitary sewer repairs and extensions, \$200,000 for water system improvements, \$100,000 for a new fire station and a new

---

<sup>4</sup> "Mayor Makes Report On His Administration, SMN (22 Jan 1957), 22:3; Jack Collins, "New City Hall Complaint Desk Proving to Be Popular Facility," SMN (9 May 1957), 36:6; "Four-Year Terms Proposed For Mayor, Aldermen," SMN (20 Nov 1957), B12:1; Arthur Whitfield, "City Fiscal Condition Said Sound," SMN (5 Mar 1957), 18:1; Beryl Sellers, "City Lists Surplus of \$8,233 for 1957," SMN (27 Feb 1958), B16:1; Beryl Sellers, "1957 Was Time of Progress and Belt-Tightening for City," SMN (1 Jan 1958), B10:3.

100-foot aerial ladder track, \$300,000 for a new football stadium in Bacon Park, and \$125,000 for a new combination National Guard Armory and indoor sports arena to be built on land donated by the County.

The newly installed "Traffic Brain" began directing traffic at the intersection of Victory Drive and Skidaway Road.

### **1958<sup>5</sup>**

**The Governor of Georgia signed the mayor-aldermen bills into law after Savannahians voted overwhelmingly in favor of the bill on May 27, 1958, 4,024 to 2,283. As a result, the mayor and aldermen of Savannah began a four-year term, as opposed to a two-year term, on October 6.**

### **1959<sup>6</sup>**

Frank Jacocks resigned as Savannah's first city manager to work for the United States Public Health Service.

John O. Hall, of Oklahoma, was selected as the new city manager.

**The City Council approved a \$27,305,966 capital improvement program for the five-year period of 1960 through 1965. The plan, drawn up by Jacocks shortly before he resigned, included a combination of City funds, Federal urban renewal money, and money returned by property owners whose streets had been paved.**

---

<sup>5</sup> SMN Index 1958, (citation 26 Mar 1958, B10:1); "Four-Year Terms Okayed by Voters," SMN (28 May 1958), B12:1.

<sup>6</sup> SMN Index 1959, (citation 1 Aug 1959, B12:2; 25 Sep 1959, B14:9; 28 Sep 1959, B10:6); Joe Flanders, "City's Capital Improvements Plan Calls for \$27,305,966," SMN (15 Aug 1959), B10:2.



## **1960<sup>7</sup>**

A new local government radio system was installed in municipal vehicles other than those used by police and fire departments in April at cost of roughly \$15,000.

Mayor Mingledorff resigned and Alderman Malcolm Maclean was elected to complete his unexpired term.

The Department of Public Improvements was reorganized into three divisions: Engineering; Water and Sewers; and Streets and Sanitation. The changes resulted in greater speed of undertaking needed work, and improvements completed with greater efficiency and economy. The most important capital improvements of the year were the completion of Memorial Stadium at a total cost of \$568,267 and the Sophronia Tompkins Gymnasium at a cost of \$60,578.

The Traffic Engineering Department made 80 special signs to mark the historic tour route in the city. The department's Drivers' Improvement School, conducted by the Assistant Traffic Engineer, was attended by 2,500 persons during the year.

The Park and Tree Department surveyed and marked lots in South Laurel Grove Cemetery.

Carnegie Library was provided with its first publicly owned vehicle for transporting books.

The Police Department Records Division was improved with the addition of IBM equipment. Several officers were sent to the Traffic Institute at Northwestern University to study methods of handling traffic and personnel management. A new range for pistol training was completed at Travis Field.

The Fire Department activated two new stations on the south side to provide fire protection for the newly annexed area. In addition, the department formed the Fire-Police Patrol, with nine members of the Fire Department sent to the Police Department during December for training, and eight police sent to the Fire Department for training. The new patrol was meant to serve the newly annexed areas.

**The Finance Department created the new Budget Office to develop the Council's participation in budget preparation as fully as possible, and investigate and analyze the requests of various departments and agencies for funds. The Budget Officer examined and evaluated municipal revenues and expenditures to ensure the best possible use of the City's**

---

<sup>7</sup> Jimmy Mizell, "Municipal Vehicles Get Radio System," SMN (9 Mar 1960), B10:6; SMN Index 1960, (citations 30 Jul 1960, B12:2; 29 Jul 1960, B12:8; 31 Jul 1960, B1:2; 4 Aug 1960, D10:6); "1960 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1960, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

**resources, and created a new budget manual, issued to city departments outlining procedures to be followed in preparing a budget program.**

**1961<sup>8</sup>**

The area annexed in 1960 was de-annexed at the end of January 1961.

In August, the Fire Department began a contractual fire service agreement plan for persons living outside city limits. By the end of 1961, 158 subscribers to plan led to the reopening of Station 10 with two men on duty at all times.

The Personnel Department enrolled fifteen top level supervisors at Armstrong State College (now Armstrong Atlantic State University) in a three-month course in Municipal Supervisory Methods. The course was a joint project of the college, the City, and the International City Managers' Association.

The Police Department was reorganized into four major divisions, each headed by a Captain of Police: Administrative Division, Criminal Investigation Division, Traffic Division, and Patrol Division. Plans to obtain several German shepherd police dogs for night patrol and handling disorderly crowds were developed at end of 1961.

The Department of Public Improvements completes the Savannah Sports Center with funds from the city of \$150,962. The modern facility was incorporated as part of the National Guard Armory.

**The acquisition of a new Dumpmaster-container refuse collection system cleaned up the downtown lanes, requiring merchants to place all garbage in the containers. Improved efficiency in refuse collection and street sweeping reduced City costs by \$140,000 per year, a major achievement in a city the size of Savannah.**

The city manager charter was threatened in early 1961 when Senator Spence Grayson called for a referendum on Savannah's city manager government. Grayson's platform was that he had heard a lot of criticism since the new form of government had been introduced, while Representative Grady Dickey stated he had heard little backlash against the new government.

---

<sup>8</sup> "1961 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1961, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; "Senator Amends Limits Bill," SMN (3 Feb 1961), B8:6.

**1962<sup>9</sup>**

Nathanael Greene Park Subdivision became a reality when construction through a contract began of the 59-lot subdivision. The plans were prepared in cooperation with the City's Department of Public Improvements.

The Department of Finance sold \$1,140,000 water and sewer revenue bonds. With the help of the Budget Officer and Police Department, the traffic ticket program was reorganized.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) began staffing the Chatham County-Savannah Board of Appeals and prepared base maps for an inventory of facilities of historic and architectural significance.

**In March 1962, fourteen city officials received certificates after completing a 14-week course in Supervisory Methods in Municipal Administration at Armstrong State College.**

John O. Hall resigned as city manager and Arthur "Don" A. Mendonsa, of MPC, was named Savannah's new city manager.

**1963<sup>10</sup>**

**The City ended the 1963 budget year with a cash surplus of \$783,567, the first cash surplus in more than 30 years.**

The City replaced the antiquated fire alarm system with a modern telephone emergency system.

Air conditioning was installed in City Hall, located at Bull and Bay streets.

Construction of the Nathanael Greene Subdivision was completed.

Initial plans were made by the City Council to join with the County government to create a consolidated data processing center.

The Police Department organized a Juvenile Bureau.

The Personnel Department adopted a new pay plan for city employees improving compensation

---

<sup>9</sup> "1962 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1962, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; SMN Index 1962, (citations 3 Mar 1962, B2:6; 3 Jul 1962, A1:6; 7 Jul 1962, A1:4).

<sup>10</sup> "1963 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1963, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; SMN Index 1963, (citation 1 Jun 1963, B10:6).

in terms of direct salaries and fringe benefits.

#### **1964<sup>11</sup>**

**The City's first annual capital improvement budget was adopted and placed into execution. More than \$2,000,000 in capital improvements were started in 1964 as a result of the new budget.**

During a second consecutive budget year, the City ended with a cash surplus, and for the tenth consecutive year ended with a revenue surplus.

The City initiated a study to develop a plan to correct the pollution problems created by the city's sewerage system.

The Recreation Commission constructed a 20-tent outdoor camping park in Bacon Park, expanded the team-dressing and locker room facilities at Memorial Stadium, opened the 39<sup>th</sup> Street Golden Age Center, and renovated the City Auditorium (interior painted, new seats installed in dress circle, orchestra level seats re-upholstered, stage floor replaced, new curtains and backdrops).

The Park and Tree Commission joined with Forward Savannah to beautify the foot of East Broad Street by the creation of Lower Emmett Park.

A Central Garage was created to service all city vehicles.

In the first full year of use of the new telephone fire reporting system, false fire alarms were down more than 50%. Construction of a new fire drill tower at Bacon Park permitted expansion of the fire fighter's training program and increased the overall efficiency of the department.

In 1964, a study of police operations was made by the Public Administration Service. On the basis of its recommendations, a reorganization program was undertaken in the Police Department resulting in: a new patrol beat system; a full-time training program; a Staff and Inspection Bureau; a tactical squad; and abolishment of the Traffic Division. As part of the overhaul, remodeling of Police Headquarters was undertaken. In addition, a Vice Unit was established in 1964, responsible for investigating liquor law violations, gambling, prostitution, narcotic traffic, and general vice repression. During its first ten months of operation it made 493 arrests on vice charges, a significant increase over prior years.

---

<sup>11</sup> "1964 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1964, Box 0121-027-1, MRL; SMN Index 1964, (citations 13 Feb 1964, D10:1; 14 May 1964, D5:5).

The City Council authorized Mayor Maclean to sign an agreement with the Chatham County Commission to establish a consolidated city-county data processing center.

Twenty-two Savannah city employees received certificates for completion of adult courses at Savannah Vocational School.

## **1965<sup>12</sup>**

City Council approved the first comprehensive group insurance for city employees.

Renovations of Police Headquarters were completed and included a new court room for the Recorder's Court, and new communication room.

Construction of the Fire Department's training facility was completed at Bacon Park, with a tower for ladder training, draft pits for training in pumper equipment use, and a building in which fires could be started for fire fighting training under fire and smoke conditions. Training classes started at the site in July.

For an eleventh consecutive budget year, the City ended with a surplus, and for a third consecutive year ended with a cash surplus.

The City Council authorized preparation of plans for a new convention center complex.

City Council awarded contracts to enlarge and renovate the main library building of the Savannah Public Library on Bull Street and construction actually began in June, funded by both City and State funds.

Plans and schedules for the City's pollution abatement program were submitted to and approved by the Federal and State pollution control agencies. The \$12,000,000 program was set to be carried out in four stages over a five-year period. Engineering contracts were awarded for the first stage of project and revenue bonds were issued to finance its cost.

The City and County joined together to finance the cost of a planning staff to assist the Downtown Revitalization Committee in the preparation of a plan for the revitalization of the downtown area. MPC helped prepare the downtown plan through basic mapping and land-use inventory studies, as well as a study of the riverfront area between West and East Broad streets.

---

<sup>12</sup> SMN Index 1965, (citation 18 Nov 1965, D12:2); "1965 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1965, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

The central garage, electrical department, electronic repair department, and building maintenance department were reorganized into the Central Services Department.

Nathanael Greene Park was completed with new grass, walkways, lights, benches, and trees.

The City joined with Forward Savannah and Savannah Electric and Power Company to construct a waterfront park on River Street. Most of the work on Lower Emmett Park was completed by the end of 1965.

**The Data Processing Center was established to provide services to the City and County, with systems including property tax billing and utility billing.**

### **1966<sup>13</sup>**

J. Curtis Lewis won the election for mayor.

The City ended year with a cash surplus (for fourth consecutive year) of \$125,151. The City retired \$845,000 in General Obligation Bond debt, and \$344,000 in Revenue Bond debt.

Three major programs were developed in the Police Department to combat crime: Crime Analysis; Tactical Squad; and Community Relations Program. In Crime Analysis, all crime incidents were reported by time of day, characteristics of crime scene, and other information to help identify patterns. This information, placed on a computer, was used for a continuing crime-analysis program providing the basis for force deployment and for designing crime prevention programs. The Tactical Squad was an unassigned squad of seven to thirteen men deployed on the basis of need to crime hot spots. The Community Relations Program was designed to control and prevent juvenile crime through the assignment of a police youth worker in neighborhoods with high incidents of juveniles delinquents. The police officer worked with the churches, schools, parents, and juveniles in the neighborhood to develop programs to deter juvenile crime.

In 1966, the Fire Department began a full-time training program, with a new training division and full-time training officer. The objectives of the program included the establishment of uniform standards for station training programs, development of a new recruit training program, and a command officer training program. The first course, in the techniques of Fire Department Administration, was scheduled for May 1967.

**In 1966, the City adopted the 1965 edition of the Southern Standard Housing Code in order**

---

<sup>13</sup> SMN Index 1966, (citation 3 Aug 1966, A1:8); "1966 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1966, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

**to fulfill requirements for the Urban Renewal Program. A social worker was added to the Minimum Housing Code Enforcement staff to work with residents in the Housing Code Enforcement areas to develop neighborhood improvement programs, and encourage residents to participate in the improvement of their own neighborhoods. Savannah was one of the first communities in Georgia to initiate such a program.**

The City's Personnel Department instituted the Police Cadet Program with the Police Department to provide trained, qualified police officers through an apprentice-type training program for young men.

1966 was the first full year in which the City operated the Capital Improvements Program Fund. The fund was set up as a non-add budget which received operating appropriations from the General Fund and the Water and Sewer Fund, and provided better control of the Capital Improvements Program.

In an agreement between the City Council and the County Commissioners, the City assumed responsibility for the construction and operation of the civic center facility, and the County assumed the City's cost of operating the Savannah-Chatham County Library system, the drug dispensary, and Memorial Hospital. Following the 1965 selection of Orleans Square as the future site, the decision to acquire the land for the civic center under the Urban Renewal Program was made. Actual work on the project began in 1966, when the City applied for funds to develop a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP). Within the GNRP's boundaries the City designated the boundaries of a Coliseum Urban Renewal Project. In March, the City made an application to purchase the construction site under the early land acquisition program of the Urban Renewal Program, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development approved the application in September. In October, the Housing Authority began acquisition of the land. The schedule called for the land to be acquired, cleared and readied for construction by July 1967.

City Hall improvements completed during the year included: cleaning the exterior by sand blasting; repairing and repainting the windows, roof dome and cupola; and updating the electrical systems.

As part of the City's extensive Urban Renewal Projects: the Cherokee Plaza land acquisition and demolition was completed with 130 families and 18 businesses relocated; modern housing units were under construction to replace 496 substandard structures in Egmont; structures in the Troup Ward area were inspected and contracts awarded for site improvements (paving, sidewalk repair, and landscaping); Kayton Homes replaced 315 substandard structures with new low rent housing; and a survey and planning project for the Central Area GNRP began.

An engineering contract was awarded to prepare preliminary plans and cost estimates for the

Riverfront Beautification project. The study estimated costs at \$2,600,000 and led to an application for Urban Renewal funds.

#### **1967<sup>14</sup>**

Two phases of the Riverfront Revitalization project were approved. The City authorized the realignment of River Street in accordance with Riverfront Improvement Plan.

Mendonsa resigned his position and Picot B. Floyd was elevated to the role of city manager.

**The new post of Community Service Officer was created and Henry W. Jenkins, former city streets administer, was appointed. Savannah was the first American city to establish this office patterned after the Swedish Ombudsman. The Ombudsman (an old Norse term meaning representative of justice), was first seen in Sweden in 1809, where it evolved into a quasi-legal authority to investigate complaints and grievances of the Swedish people. In the United States a similar post had been installed in several state governments, however with no judicial power and without independence from executive or legislative bodies. The Ombudsman position helped alleviate the burden on elected officials that have neither the time nor office facilities to thoroughly investigate all of their constituents' complaints.**

The City approved a \$7 million bond issue for construction of the new civic center.

Savannah was granted \$363,000 in Federal funds for its pollution abatement program.

#### **1968<sup>15</sup>**

**The City received a Model Cities grant from the Federal government for \$136,000 to upgrade an 857-acre area in downtown Savannah.**

The city manager appointed T. E. Sears to head Model City project committee.

A \$25,000 grant from the Federal government was approved for the development of mini-parks.

---

<sup>14</sup> SMN Index 1967, (citations 12 Jul 1967, B12:1; 4 Nov 1967, 7:2; 31 Mar 1967, 1:3; 2 May 1967, B8:1; 31 Dec 1967, 1:6); Bill Douthat, "Ombudsman Post is Unique Experiment," SMN (7 Jan 1968, C1:4); Phil Smith, "1967 Labeled The 'R' Year," SMN (31 Dec 1967), VF-Savannah-Politics and Government, 1960-1969, CELB.

<sup>15</sup> SMN Index 1968, (citations 7 Sep 1968, B10:1; 28 Nov 1968, D1:1; 30 Nov 1968, B12:7; 28 Sep 1968, B10:5; 5 Oct 1968, B5:1; 14 Sep 1968, B10:2; 11 Oct 1968, B16:4; 19 Oct 1968, B10:4; 19 Oct 1968, B10:1; 26 Oct 1968, B10:8; 19 Nov 1968, B10:1; 27 Nov 1968, A11:2); "Picot Floyd Gets Award," SMN (21 Oct 1968), B4:2.



However, the funds were held up by HUD pending the Housing Authority's compliance with desegregation orders.

MPC suggested a total redesign of Forsyth Park.

The new civic center blueprints were shown to City Council in October.

A new radio system was purchased for the Police Department.

When city manager Floyd attended the October International City Managers' Association (ICMA) conference in Detroit, the City's new "Ombudsman" post stole the limelight. Floyd received an honorable mention award from the ICMA for management innovations for the Community Service Officer concept. Floyd was appointed to the executive board of ICMA.

Floyd submitted the schedule for the pollution abatement program, at an estimated cost \$12,420,000, to the City Council for approval.

#### **1969<sup>16</sup>**

In 1969, Savannah became the first Georgia city to win the All-America City award for a second time. The second award was given for "decisively and energetically mobilizing local resources to meet the problems of your city."

**City Manager Picot B. Floyd was honored by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 342 for his work in the contract negotiations between the labor union and the City. (Staff photo by Don Hardigree, "Floyd, Walls Honored," SMN (24 Aug 1969), 1C:1)**

Savannah Community Service Officer Jenkins was the principal speaker at the Southeastern Assembly on the Ombudsman.

The historic Harbor Light underwent a complete renovation with help of the City.

Local firemen's work week was reduced from 72 to 56 hours.

---

<sup>16</sup> "Nixon Wires Congratulations," SNP (20 Mar 1969), All-America City Files, MRL; "Floyd, Walls Honored," SMN (24 Aug 1969), 1C:1; SMN Index 1969, (citations 11 Mar 1969, 8A:6; 4 May 1969, 2C:3; 7 Apr 1969, 1A:4; 14 Jun 1969, 10B:4; 9 Jul 1969, 8D:5; 11 Jul 1969, 7B:5; 20 Jul 1969, 1C:1; 28 Aug 1969, 10D:2; 23 Aug 1969, 12B:1; 4 Sep 1969, 12D:1; 6 Sep 1969, 10B:1; 1 Nov 1969, 5B:7; 6 Nov 1969, 3D:3; 27 Nov 1969, 12D:2; 29 Nov 1969, 5B:4; 6 Dec 1969, 12B:1; 9 Dec 1969, 10B:1; 10 Dec 1969, 10D:5; 18 Dec 1969, 12C:1).

City Manager Floyd attended President Nixon's policy talks on federal funding policies for local governments.

The City began an intern program with four students as part of the summer education program offered for first time.

The Georgia Municipal Association honored Mayor Lewis with the "Progressive City Official Award."

City Council observed "Employment Recognition Day" and handed out several awards to employees.

The City provided relief to Hurricane Camille victims in Mississippi through "Operation Good Neighbor," delivering about 62,100 pounds of supplies to Gulfport, Mississippi.

Payment by credit cards was accepted at City Hall for first time.

Council approved a fifteen-year master plan for the development of the municipal airport.

City Manager Floyd was given a high rating by Dean of City Managers.

A new mini-park area was acquired for the Model City program.

The City began "Project Transition" for local servicemen.

The Mayor's committee on drug abuse was named, and a new narcotics squad was formed to fight the growing drug problem in Savannah.

Sixty-one City employees were given service pins.

#### **1970<sup>17</sup>**

**State Representative Hagan officially announced approval of a \$7 million grant for the Savannah Riverfront Renewal project in April.**

The City applied for funds for the development of Revolutionary Battle Park.

---

<sup>17</sup> SMN Index 1970, (citations 26 Apr 1970, 1A:5; 30 Apr 1970, 1A:6; 7 May 1970, 3A:1; 1 Jul 1970, 1D:1; 6 Sep 1970, 2C:5); "Council Meeting," (9 Oct [1970]), Speeches 1970-1975-1976, Box 0110-001-X10, MRL.

Cornerstone laying ceremonies were held for the new Civic Center in downtown Savannah, off of Orleans Square.

The City accepted water treatment bids for the pollution abatement program.

The City Council authorized the application of a \$2.6 million HUD grant to launch the Model Cities action program. In October, Council held a meeting at Oglethorpe Sanitarium and signed eleven contracts worth \$1 million to launch the Model Cities program into its action year of 1971. The program included a Golden Age Center, the Police Community Relations Program, Recreation Leaders, an expanded Free Lunch Program and Talent Search, bringing the total number of programs and services offered on the street to sixteen.

#### **1971<sup>18</sup>**

The Broughton Street revitalization plan gets Mayor Rousakis' support and a panel is appointed to help launch the project.

Savannah completed a traffic study, the first of its kind in the State of Georgia.

Four-hundred jobs for youths were made available through the City's summer program.

City Manager Picot Floyd resigned his position and Don Mendonsa was reappointed to the office in August.

**Alderman Bowles Ford presided as Mayor at a City Council meeting, and became the first African American to serve in the capacity in Savannah's history.**

The City launched the \$7.1 million renewal plan of the riverfront.

A \$9 million bond issue was set to fund the pollution abatement program.

The City accepted the first entry for the 59<sup>th</sup> annual "Fix Up, Clean Up, Paint Up" contest from Helen Marshall of the Historic Savannah Foundation, a scrapbook of the City's record of beautification and restoration projects (Staff photo, "Prize City?" SMN (31 Dec 1971), 1B:1).

President Nixon and South Vietnam's Vice President Ky visited the area.

---

<sup>18</sup> SMN Index 1971, (citations 26 Jan 1971, 1B:1; 20 Feb 1971, 14B:7; 9 Jul 1971, 1B:1; 13 Feb 1971, 1A:1; 6 May 1971, 1D:2; 13 May 1971, 1A:6; 7 Aug 1971, 1B:1; 14 May 1971, 1D:8; 25 May 1971, 1B:1; 17 Sep 1971, 1B:1); "Prize City?" SMN (31 Dec 1971), 1B:1; Kathy Haerberle, "Rousakis' First Year: More Rose Than Gray," VF-Savannah-Politics and Government, 1970-1979, CELB.

Savannah's Capital Improvement program included the new school sidewalk construction program.

### **1972<sup>19</sup>**

The first phase of the pollution abatement program was launched with a \$1.5 million contract awarded to an Alabama firm. Construction began on the new waste treatment facility, and sewage treatment plants at Wilmington Park, Windsor Forest, and Travis Field were completed.

The City acquired property from the Central of Georgia Railroad on West Broad Street, and the building was declared as the "road to future" for downtown Savannah.

**After many years, the completion and grand opening of the new multi million dollars Civic Center became a reality. The City paved and lighted a new parking lot adjacent to the center.**

Playground facilities were installed at the Model Cities sites of the May Street, St. Pius and Park Avenue Centers. Street name signs were installed in the Model Cities areas and the Cloverdale Recreation Park was completed.

### **1973<sup>20</sup>**

**The City Council allowed the Savannah Chamber of Congress to develop plans for Savannah's new Visitors Center to be located in the Central of Georgia Railroad passenger station.**

Council approved the application of new "planning districts" to help determine the City's service needs.

The City resurfaced and paved more than 35 miles of streets during 1973.

---

<sup>19</sup> SMN Index 1972, (citations 4 Feb 1972, 1B:1; 12 May 1972, 1D:2; 20 Oct 1972, 1D:1; 24 Oct 1972, 1B:1); "State of the City," (Feb 1973), Speeches 1970-1975-1976, Box 0110-001-X10; "Public Service Highlights," (1972), Speeches 1970-1975-1976, Box 0110-001-X10, MRL.

<sup>20</sup> SMN Index 1973, (citations 16 Feb 1973, 1D:1; 6 Jul 1973, 1B:5); "New Year's Statement by Mayor John P. Rousakis," (28 Dec 1973), Speeches 1970-1975-1976, Box 0110-001-X10, MRL; Rackham S. Fukuhara, "Improving Effectiveness: Responsive Public Services," (Management Information Service Special Report, Sep 1978 No. 3), City Manager Files-State of the City, 1970-1980, Box 0120-001-23, MRL; "City Highlights," (23 Jan 1974), Speeches 1970-1975-1976, Box 0110-001-X10, MRL; "Memo from Beth Reiter re. Preservation Lecture," (2 Feb 1998), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL.

A joint City and MPC effort resulted in the Federally funded Community Renewal Program (CRP) study. The CRP study addressed the effectiveness of public service in meeting community needs and resulted in the City's Responsive Public Services Program (RPSP), initiated in Spring 1974, to address specific issues pointed out by the CRP.

The City razed fifty-seven unsafe buildings in 1973, compared to only twenty-one in 1972.

Four new vacuum-type street sweepers were purchased, enabling the City to institute a regular residential sweeping schedule. Extensive replacement and upgrading of the fleet of sanitation vehicles also improved regular trash pickup.

The Police Department's new Crime Prevention Unit became operative, helping merchants who were susceptible to burglaries and robberies.

In December, the Federal government awarded the City 75% of the funds needed for the York Lane Interceptor project as part of the long-term pollution abatement program.

The City organized a new Department of Leisure Services.

The City created the Historic District Board of Review, composed of eleven members appointed by the Mayor and Aldermen for terms of three years. MPC still provides office and staff support for the Board through the City Preservation Officer.

#### **1974<sup>21</sup>**

**The Responsive Public Services Program (RPSP) was initiated based upon the recognition that the City has certain responsibilities to its citizens including: maintenance of community livability standards; identification of areas that are impacted by problem conditions; and responses to neighborhood service deficiencies with programs targeted at high need areas. The City used an analytical approach to study Savannah's 21 planning units (divided from its 33 square miles) through field inspections, citizen surveys, special studies, and operational information, with the result of more attention devoted to data collection and analysis, and the decision making process rationalized so service problems could be addressed.**

---

<sup>21</sup> Rackham S. Fukuhara, "Improving Effectiveness: Responsive Public Services," (Management Information Service Special Report, Sep 1978 No. 3), City Manager Files-State of the City, 1970-1980, Box 0120-001-23, MRL.

**1975<sup>22</sup>**

City Council approved a planning contract for the Revolutionary War Battlefield Park.

Savannah received \$7.24 million in Federal Community Development funds.

**The City opened construction bids for the River Street Urban Renewal project. A contract of \$6,492,926 was awarded by the City Council to Bellamy Brothers, Inc. of Ellenwood, Georgia for the improvements. On July 11, 1975, groundbreaking ceremonies marked an end to years of planning.**

As part of the Pollution Abatement Program, the President Street treatment plant became fully operational and was officially accepted by the City on August 1, 1975. The final cost of the plant was reported at \$14,360,000.

The Fire Department established a new Tactical Squad of four men and a vehicle to respond to all calls in the City and place more men at the scene of each fire. In addition, the department began an extensive Inspection Program in areas where fire losses were the highest, efforts were initially aimed at Planning Unit 19 in the Model Neighborhood area.

The City sold land on Montgomery Street to the County for a proposed County Court House and Jail within the Central Urban Renewal Area for \$308,500. The City's hope was that the project would further stabilize the western end of the Central Business District.

Starting in 1975, the city began developing the Integrated Budgeting System to help determine the annual budget by integrating the activity of budgeting with planning, scheduling, evaluation, and effectiveness measurement.

**1976<sup>23</sup>**

**With completion of the City's \$30 million Pollution Abatement Program, including the President Street treatment plant, no raw sewage was being dumped into the Savannah River by the City for first time since Savannah was founded.**

The City instituted a modular pay plan first in the Police and Fire Departments and then in all other City departments. The key feature of the system was that it provided an incentive to

---

<sup>22</sup> SMN Index 1975, (citations 3 Jan 1975, 1B:1; 7 May 1975, 1D:4; 21 May 1975, 1D:1; 24 Jun 1975, 1B:6); "State of the City Address," (21 Jan 1976), City Manager Files-State of the City, 1970-1980, Box 0120-001-23, MRL.

<sup>23</sup> "1976 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1976, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

personnel to participate in training and educational programs that would improve their job effectiveness.

The Police Department received a Federal grant allowing them to place more officers on the street during peak crime periods, institute a Parade Control program, and start the Police Chaplain Program. The chaplains provided an invaluable service by relaying death messages, comforting families of victims, comforting families of slain officers, counseling police officers, dealing with potential suicides, and training officers to deal with personal problems of citizens.

Findings from the Housing Program Study were used to design a three-part housing program to be established with \$4 million of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The new Homeowner Rehabilitation Program (NHRP) was projected to offer at least 200 low and moderate income owner-occupants an opportunity to bring their homes up to code standards.

Savannah was selected as one of eighteen cities in the nation to work with the Urban Reinvestment Task Force in an effort to revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods.

The City was awarded a "AA" bond rating by both Moody's and Standard & Poor's, allowing Savannah to receive low interest bids on the 1976 bond issue comparable to bonds with a "AAA" rating.

#### **1977<sup>24</sup>**

Mayor Rousakis was elected first vice-president of the National League of Cities during its annual meeting in San Francisco.

A reduction in the millage rate from 27 mills to nine mills was made possible by the Local Option Sales Tax, placed in effect in April 1976. The sales tax amounted to \$7,383,646 in 1977.

Capital Improvements completed in 1977 included: Phase II of the sanitary landfill on Ogeechee Road, US Highway 17 to provide solid waster disposal in the area for approximately the next three years; major drainage systems in the Tatemville area and the Oakdale Subdivision; and the John P. Rousakis Riverfront Plaza. As part of the Riverfront Urban Renewal project, the plaza helped draw tourists and residents to the riverfront, and contributed to the overall stabilization and revitalization of the downtown area.

The Mayor and Aldermen appointed a thirty-member Revolutionary Battlefield Park Committee

---

<sup>24</sup> SMN Index 1977, (citations 9 Dec 1977, 1C:4; 9 Aug 1978, 1B:5); "1977 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1977, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

charged with the task of making plans for a permanent memorial of the Siege of Savannah, while planning a commemorative event to honor the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle which occurred on October 9, 1779. At the time, the City had already spent \$352,000 to stabilize the circa 1850 Central of Georgia Railroad structures on the 5.6 acre site.

**The Housing Department was created in March to develop and implement a comprehensive housing improvement program. The objectives of the new department were to encourage and facilitate the repair and improvement of substandard residential properties and to promote quality and reasonably priced housing repair. Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance Program (HRAP) was the first housing program implemented by the department in ten of the planning units with the greatest percentage of owner-occupied residential units. Response to the program was tremendous creating an immediate backlog of case files requesting low interest loans and grants for low and moderate income homeowners.**

The Housing Department assisted the Neighborhood Housing Services Program (NHS) in development of the Baldwin Park neighborhood project, selected as NHS's target area for its rehabilitation and stabilization program. Through the Housing Department, the City provided technical assistance to homeowners applying for financial assistance through NHS.

The Police Department began a new program sending an officer to work at the Georgia Regional Hospital for one week under the supervision of mental health technicians. The program proved to be extremely valuable in improving an officer's ability to deal with emotionally and mentally disturbed people.

Under the Fire Department's Home Inspection Program, residential fires were reduced from 466 in 1976 to 400 in 1977. The program was extended in 1977 to the Downtown Business District, with inspections on Friday and Saturday nights for violations of fire codes.

With money, through Federal grant programs, the City offered Adult Day Care Services, a Child Day Care Program, a program for the Blind, and an Apprenticeship Job Training Program to residents in the Savannah area.

The Resource Management and Control System was introduced to improve the City's productivity by providing a system for measuring the work proposed in the annual budget and reporting on the progress of that work. The new system helped to reduce taxes while still increasing services at the same time.

The City ended the year with a \$4.5 million surplus.



**1978<sup>25</sup>**

**An annexation referendum voted 30,000 new citizens and 25 square miles of additional area into the City limits, strengthening the City's position in the State and having a dramatic effect on the economic base of the City (this is the same area annexed in 1960 and de-annexed in 1961).**

The Annexation Act increased the number of aldermen from six to eight, with six elected by district, and the Mayor and two additional aldermen elected at-large. Previously, all aldermen and the Mayor were elected at-large. The new Council, elected under this procedure, assumed office in October.

The Victorian District was designated as a Neighborhood Strategy Area by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Because of this designation, the City received an allotment of Section 8 funds to provide rent subsidies for 500 housing units in the Victorian District. Impetus for the project came from the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc., a private, nonprofit organization. In 1978, Savannah Landmark was awarded an innovative projects grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for administrative and "front end" project support. This grant was administered through the City's Housing Department. In addition, the Housing Department funded part of the operating cost of the Neighborhood Housing Services program and contributed \$112,000 toward the revolving loan fund for the Baldwin Park area.

The City made plans to relinquish the City Jail in 1979 when Chatham County assumed the function for the entire county. The City had continuously maintained a City Jail since 1870.

1978 was the first full year of the Leisure Services Bureau's therapeutic recreation program, providing year-round activities for children and adults requiring special care. The Adult Day Care program was recognized by the Council on Aging as one of the top in the nation, and the center manager was one of three professionals asked to speak at the national convention in 1979.

The City entered into a contract with Land Design/Research, Inc., to develop plans for improving Forsyth Park with special emphasis placed on active and passive recreation. Major elements of the plan included lighting, irrigation, walks, parking lots, a multi-purpose play area, and recreational facilities.

The City-County Data Processing Center moved into the new Chatham County Courthouse and converted all existing financial and administrative batch programs to a new Sperry Univac 1100/11 system. The new building provided a controlled environment for City equipment

---

<sup>25</sup> "1978 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1978, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

including air conditioning, raised flooring, a Halon fire detection and distinguishing system, and improved security, as opposed to the center's previous home in the basement of the Gamble Building.<sup>26</sup>

The millage rate was further reduced from 9.0 mills to 8.5 mills.

### **1979<sup>27</sup>**

Hurricane David hit Savannah. Though it caused little property damage, many trees were blown down. The clean up plan was devised and carried out by the City in approximately sixty days and included 28,000 truck loads of storm debris removed by Sanitation Department.

The Community Planning and Development Department (CPD) worked toward the goal of acquiring Federal financial assistance through CDBG grants for the overall improvement of the City's target areas by means of planning and development. During 1979, four new neighborhood groups were organized, bringing the City total to 18 in the 28 planning units. CPD published its "Cornerstone" newsletter to inform residents of meetings, public hearings and special events, and applied to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service for funds to improve Crawford Square, Live Oak Park, Tompkins Street Recreation Center, and the May Street Center. The application resulted in an award of \$322,000 to the City.

In 1979, CPD awarded funds to S.A.F.E. Shelter to address the problem of battered wives and for a Parent-Child Development Center aimed at dealing with the problem of neglected and abused children.

In March 1979, an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) of \$650,000 was awarded for the Victorian District, with a commitment of \$2.17 million in private investment from local lenders for housing rehabilitation loans. The UDAG funds, for sidewalk, lighting, and park improvements, would be released when 50% of the private investments had been completed or begun.

The City was chosen as one of 68 communities to receive a cooperative agreement grant for resource recovery studies under the President's Urban Policy Program. The \$49,320 grant, through the Environmental Protection Agency, and cash and in-kind assistance of the City, financed a nine-month study to determine the feasibility of a solid waste resource recovery facility for Savannah to convert garbage and trash to energy. The study was set to begin in

---

<sup>26</sup> "1978 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1978, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

<sup>27</sup> "1979 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1979, Box 0121-027-1, MRL.

February 1980.

The Clean Community System Program was designed to encourage citizen involvement in keeping the community clean by changing behavior and attitudes. The Mayor and Aldermen appointed a Clean Community Advisory Council and the program was accredited by "Keep America Beautiful" in November. The "Keep Savannah Clean-You'll Love It!" slogan and emblem were introduced for the first time (see "1979 Annual Report" for example).

The new local CETA Program (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) was sponsored jointly by the City and County and fully funded by the Federal government. The program provided jobs and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged, unemployed members of the community. During 1979, 4,236 area residents received CETA services.

Plans were finalized for an additional aeration system to be installed at President Street Pollution Treatment Plant, with funding provided by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In 1979, the Resource Management and Control Program (RMAC) resulted in more than \$500,000 in additional savings in delivering City services. Since initiation of the program in 1977, the total savings had reached well more than \$1,000,000.

The Personnel Department implemented two significant benefits for employees, unemployment compensation and maternity leave.

The Housing Department worked with Yamacraw Branch of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASAALH) to move and renovate the King-Tisdell Cottage from the Wheaton Street Urban Renewal Area. City Council provided \$80,000 for the complete renovation of the house as a museum and office for ASAALH.

In conjunction with MPC, the Historic Savannah Foundation, and Savannah Landmark, the City sponsored a field study of the Victorian District by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). Floor plans and elevations were prepared of twenty houses selected as outstanding examples of architecture or as representative of the district (copies of all drawings and photographs were to be given to City and the originals were placed in the HABS collection at the Library of Congress, available on-line through the Prints & Photographs Reading Room).

The Victorian District Revitalization Project, implemented in 1979, called for 500 housing units for low and moderate income families to be repaired using Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation Program funds from HUD.

The P.T.I. Fire Station Location Project, initiated in 1979, divided the City into fire demand zones determined by the extent of life and fire hazards, with the goals of improving the location of fire

stations, the I.S.O. rating in newly annexed area, and response times.

Land Design/Research, Inc. published a study in March, "Program for Economic Growth in Downtown Savannah," which identified several projects with strong development potential, particularly in the northwest quadrant. The City's Bureau of Public Development created an Economic Development Department charged with working directly with the private sector in planning and implementing downtown development projects.

**The City Cultural Arts Department initiated a program of contractual grants for arts agencies. During 1979, the Savannah Symphony, the Savannah Ballet Guild, the Ballet South, the Little Theatre, the Savannah Science Museum, the Telfair Academy, and the Coastal Heritage Museum all participated. Roughly 10,000 people attended the free series of Savannah Symphony concerts sponsored by the program.**

Savannah became one of the few municipalities in the State to appoint an Arts Council and participate in the Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities Community Arts Council program. The overall thrust of the program was the development and implementation of a community-wide comprehensive arts plan, with the ultimate goal implementing an arts program to contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of life of all citizens.

City Manager Mendonsa received the 1979 Outstanding Management Innovator Award from the International City Management Association for the development of four innovative programs over a five-year period: Responsive Public Services Program (RPSP); Resource Management and Control System (RMAC); Integrated Budgeting System; and Modular Pay Plan.

## **1980<sup>28</sup>**

City Council declared January 15 a legal City holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Capital improvements completed in 1980 included: the revitalization of Dixon Park; completion of the Richards Street Community Center; renovation of City Hall's dome; installation of disabled access to the Gamble Building; twenty miles of streets paved; and more than \$2 million expended for improvement and expansion of the City's Water and Sewer System.

**Planning for the first phase of Bowles C. Ford Park was completed and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 23, 1980. Named after Savannah's first African American alderman, Bowles Park was located on the site of an old municipal landfill and sewage**

---

<sup>28</sup> SMN Index 1980, (citation 11 Jan 1980, 1A:3); "1980 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1980, MRL; "Bowles C. Ford Park Groundbreaking Ceremony," (press release, 23 Apr 1980), City Manager Files-Speeches (Rousakis), 1974-1989, Box 0120-001-23, MRL.

**treatment pond on the west side of town.**

The “Super Clean Team” animated characters were developed to help support the message of the Clean Communities Program. The characters aired on local television starting in 1981.

The Park and Tree Department developed a Master Tree Plan for the City, establishing the goal of planting 1,000 new trees per year.

Savannah became the second city in Georgia authorized by HUD to approve Section 312 loans prior to submission to HUD. This resulted in greatly reducing the processing time for Savannah applications.

The City’s Cultural Arts Program was presented a first place award by the Georgia Recreation and Parks Society for outstanding performance in arts and humanities programming.

The Savannah Arts Commission organized the first Artist’s Congress, an informal coalition of artists and arts providers to contribute information on the community’s art needs.

Savannah was the only southern city to be awarded grants in both the first and second funding rounds of the Urban Parks and Recreational Recovery Program. The first grant of \$13,475 was awarded to fund a position in the Leisure Services Department to coordinate the use of existing recreational facilities with the Board of Education. The second and third grants, \$322,217 and \$250,627 respectively, funded improvements to facilities at the May Street Center, Tompkins Center, Tompkins Swimming Pool, Live Oak Park, Crawford Square, Davant Park, Wells Park, and Cann Park.

#### **1981<sup>29</sup>**

Carolyn H. Bell became the City’s first black female city administrator.

The newly annexed Southside area received an upgrade in its fire rating from 5 to 3, equal to that of the rest of the city. Securing of a Class 3 insurance rating from the Insurance Services Office resulted in decreased fire insurance rates for many Southside commercial properties.

**The 1981 goal of paving eleven miles of street was doubled, by year’s end 20.59 miles of paving had been accomplished.**

The City completed a Comprehensive Recreation Facilities Plan (CRFP) which included analysis

---

<sup>29</sup> SMN Index 1981, (citation 13 Sep 1981, 1F:5); “1981 Annual Report,” SAV.CM.01-1981, MRL.

of new recreation facility needs and existing facility repair needs. The Recovery Action Program (RAP), required for the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program, was completed with additional information.

During the sixth Community Development Block Grant year, expenditures on Community Development eligible activities in Savannah total approximately \$8 million.

The first steps toward revitalization of the downtown area included the completion of a comprehensive downtown development plan, establishment of the Downtown Development Authority (to act as an incentive for downtown investment by providing tax-exempt bond financing), and establishment of the Parking Management Agency. The Parking Management Agency announced the site of the first municipal parking garage in October.

The City's Labor Resources Department opened an Assessment Center to evaluate individuals' skills and abilities, and initiated a new program aimed at area refugee job assistance.

The Finance Department instituted the Investment Income Improvement Program, increasing the City's annual investments to \$604,000 for 1982. This was accomplished by reducing \$5.2 million of un-invested money in 1980 to \$1.5 million in 1981, making a significant impact on the City's financial status.

With the help of MPC, Savannah received a Federal grant of more than \$39,000 for the Bikeway Project, providing for bicycle paths, lanes, and racks along major thoroughfares and at public buildings.

The Sanitation Department established the Rat Control Program (RCP) with \$63,000 allocated by City Council to combat rodent infestation. The program provided technical assistance, abatement of rodents on public right-of-ways, and maintained public outreach programs in targeted areas.

The City's Cultural Arts Department printed an Arts Directory, listing individuals and cultural arts organizations in the area, and established the ARTSline as a public service with a recorded message highlighting current and upcoming cultural arts activities in Savannah.

Working with the Savannah Arts Commission, the City funded \$200,000 worth of Community Cultural Arts Programming, including free Sunday admission to two museums, outdoor symphony concerts, a riverfront theater performance, a summer arts program for children, and several theater workshops about the "Clean Community" program.

**1982<sup>30</sup>**

The Police Department instituted a new police beat system which improved response time and increased time available for preventive patrol. Ten additional officers and fourteen additional patrol cars were authorized by City Council to implement the new system.

The Savannah Certified Development Corporation (SCDC) was established to provide low cost, long term financing for local business development. At the same time, the Downtown Development Authority used tax-exempt bond financing for \$25 million worth of downtown office, apartment, and lodging facility projects.

A full-time downtown services program was established with a Downtown Services Coordinator. In their first year, the Coordinator conducted a downtown street-scape study, and monitored the architectural design contract for the new municipal parking garage.

Forsyth Park was reopened after extensive renovations.

Capital improvements included the completion of the new Liberty City Fire Station (final cost of \$724,490), and completion of Phase I of the new vehicle maintenance facility (cost of \$287,697). Bowles Ford Park and Wells Park were both completed. Renovation of the Spanish American Park in Laurel Grove Cemetery was completed with the help of the Trustees' Garden Club.

**Through the Community Planning and Development Office, Phase I of the Victorian District Streetscape Improvements was completed with sidewalk rehabilitation and landscaping. In addition, efforts were started with the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project to rehabilitate structures in the Victorian District through SNAP (Savannah Neighborhood Action Project). The Victorian District project was recognized by President Reagan as one of eleven national models of public and private partnerships.**

Savannah received a \$277,000 UPARR Innovative Projects grant for the City's first playground for the handicapped.

The Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association recognized Savannah's Wilmington Park Wastewater Treatment Plant as the "Outstanding Plant in its category in the State of Georgia." The Travis Field, Islandwood, and Wilmington Park Wastewater Treatment Plants were all candidates for operational awards for 1983.

The City's Sanitation Bureau directs the design and development of the proposed Resource Recovery Facility, set to be in operation in late 1985, the plant would produce steam, by burning

---

<sup>30</sup> "1982 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1982, MRL; SMN Index 1982, (citation 28 Nov 1982, 2D:5).

refuse, that could then be sold to American Cyanamid.

The Cultural Affairs Department contracted \$276,403 worth of community arts programming, including an outdoor production of "Two Gentlemen of Verona" in Forsyth Park and an "Inventor's Expo" at the Savannah Science Museum. Together with the Savannah Arts Commission, they hosted a free grant-writing workshop for non-profit cultural organizations interested in using Georgia Council for the Arts funds.

City Manager Mendonsa was one of three Savannahians commended by the Governor of Georgia for efforts to protect Georgia's coastal resources.

### **1983<sup>31</sup>**

The City helped fund the Community Cardiovascular Council, Inc.

A new handicapped park was under construction at Daffin Park, the first facility of this type in Savannah, and the largest of its kind in the Southeast.

Groundbreaking for the Revolutionary Battle Park project area was held on January 12, 1983.

The Liberty City annexed area's fire rating was upgraded from 5 to 3 due to the City's construction of a new fire station and water system improvements.

CETA, which expired on September 30, 1983, was replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

Savannah's Human Services Department was selected as one of ten contract agencies with the State of Georgia to participate in a pilot computerized Child Care Program.

Savannah City Council began planning for the re-establishment of Franklin Square, then dissected by Montgomery Street.

An agreement was reached between the Board of Education and the City for joint use of their facilities.

**The City received the National Service Award from the Keep America Beautiful program for the development and use of the puppet show "Garbage, Goo, Litter and You!"** The

---

<sup>31</sup> SMN Index 1983, (citation 5 Aug 1983, 1C:4); Inter-Department Memos, "1983 Accomplishments," City Manager Files-State of the City, 1981-1988, Box 0120-001-23, MRL.



**performance was presented to over 5,000 area school children as part of the City's Clean Community System.**

The Fire Department, in conjunction with the Board of Education, implemented a nationally recognized "Learn Not to Burn" program into the public school system for grades kindergarten through the sixth grade.

**1984<sup>32</sup>**

The City government celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Council-Manager form of government.

**Cablevision began delayed broadcast of City Council meetings. The first broadcast was aired in November 1984.**

The Great Savannah Exposition museum opened in the train shed behind the Visitors Center. The \$10 million facility hoped to become a major tourist attraction for the city.

The City contracted for the expansion of the municipal golf course to twenty-seven holes.

A contract for the construction of the municipal garage, with 475 planned parking spaces, was awarded.

**1985<sup>33</sup>**

At the suggestion of City Manager Mendonsa, City Council approved the use of the "boot" for chronic parking offenders.

**City Council hired Kimley-Horn & Associates to design a second downtown parking garage to help alleviate the parking problems.**

Repairs were made to the eighty-year old City Hall windows.

---

<sup>32</sup> SMN Index 1984, (citations 1 Jan 1984, 1A:3; 9 Nov 1984, 1D:6; 20 Nov 1984, 12C:5); "State of the City," (4 Mar 1985), City Manager Files-State of the City, 1981-1988, Box 0120-001-23, MRL.

<sup>33</sup> SMN Index 1985, (citations 19 Jul 1985, 1A:6; 25 Oct 1985, 1A:1; 29 Aug 1985, 1D:1).

**1986<sup>34</sup>**

In the fall, work began on the gold leafing of the City Hall dome, funded in large part by an anonymous local donor.

Both new municipal garages, State Street Garage and Montgomery Street Garage, were placed in operation representing a cost of approximately \$10 million and about 1,000 new off-street parking spaces.

The Civic Center received a boost with the establishment of a professional basketball team, the Savannah Spirits of the Continental Basketball Association.

The Park and Tree Department completed restoration of Franklin Square.

The City's fire insurance rating was upgraded from class 3 to class 2.

**The City completed the installation of a new computer controlled traffic light system. The "closed loop" system enabled coordinated operation of corridors with varying traffic characteristics, and was the largest of its kind in the country, operating without the need for computer technicians, expensive communications equipment, or high maintenance costs.**

Cultural Affairs programs sponsored by the City included the Arts-On-The-River Weekend, a jazz festival, and an outreach cultural services program within neighborhoods.

The Fire Department continued its Blood Pressure Program, performing about 4,000 readings free of charge at several locations throughout the city.

The U.S. Corps of Engineers gave the City *Tug Dozier* to refit as a fireboat. The City Council renamed the tug *Edward J. Fogarty* in honor of the late head of the Civil Defense Council.

The Dispatch Unit occupied a new communication center and became responsible for the enhanced emergency 911 phone system, one of only about 100 in the nation.

The City assumed the management and financial responsibility for the Great Savannah Exposition, opened in Battlefield Park in 1985, from a private corporation.

---

<sup>34</sup> "1986 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1986, MRL.

**1987<sup>35</sup>**

In July, the City received a National Excellence Award for public/private partnership in the Old City Market project.

Highlights of the capital improvements program for the year included the construction of a five-field, lighted softball complex. The \$1.8 million, world-class Allen E. Paulsen Softball Complex, named for the President of Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation and a donor to the project, opened with a formal dedication in April. Two national tournaments were booked at the new complex before the facility was even completed.

**The newly gold-leafed City Hall dome was unveiled on April 23, 1987 and officially presented to its owners, the citizens of Savannah. The total cost of the project was \$230,000, funded in large part by an anonymous donor. The dome of City Hall, built in 1905, was originally bronze and over the years had deteriorated and been painted several times.**

The City's Resource Recovery Facility, one of the most economically and environmentally sound solid waste disposal facilities in the world, was completed and dedicated. Following six years of planning and two years of construction, the facility became operational in June. The first of its kind in the state, and one of only forty like it in world, the facility was located on seven acres near Kemira plant (formerly American Cyanamid) and processed up to five-hundred tons of solid waste each day.

The City completed an extensive and comprehensive study of housing conditions in the downtown area on which to base a far-reaching revitalization and improvement program.

Establishment of the Public Information Office (PIO) improved communications between the City government and the citizens it served. New programs of PIO included "City-Span," a weekly, half-hour informational program broadcast on Cable Channel 7 to discuss City programs. For the first time the City's Annual Report was prepared by PIO and distributed throughout county for greater awareness.

For the third time since 1984, the City of Savannah was awarded the "Distinguished Budget Presentation" award by the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 1987.

The City created the Weave-A-Dream program, begun with seed money from the State Arts Council and matched by City funding. The Savannah Association for the Blind was one of first local groups to take advantage of the new program, which allowed for a hands-on experience.

---

<sup>35</sup> "1987 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1987, MRL.

**1988<sup>36</sup>**

In May, the fountain in Forsyth Park was dismantled and shipped to Robinson Ironworks in Alabama to undergo extensive renovation at a cost of about \$190,000, half of which was funded by the City.

Telfair Square was officially dedicated in January representing a \$150,000 investment by the City for its renovation. In-house renovation of Myers Park, located on West Victory Drive and Burroughs, was completed and dedicated in May. Renovation of Madison Square was completed using private funds and was landscaped by the City's Park and Tree Department, with the installation of new walkways, sod, shrubbery, plants, and an irrigation system. Formal dedication of Madison Square took place on November 20. The \$500,000 revitalization program on Broughton Street was completed with new lighting and tree replacement.

In July, the City received a national award from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for its participation in the Old City Market project, particularly for the City's use of HUD funding to help revitalize the northwest quadrant in a public/private partnership project.

The City, along with community support groups, sponsored clean-ups at the Roundhouse on weekends to clear the facility of debris and dense vegetation in preparation for restoration.

**On March 10, 1988, Savannah learned it was one of five cities in the nation to receive a \$10 million grant from the Annie Casey Foundation for the proposed New Futures program to address the problems of at-risk youth. The program's goals included: reducing school drop-out rates and improving school performance; preventing teen-age parentage; reducing youth un-employment; and increasing enrollment in post-secondary education. A fifty member planning committee to oversee the project was formed with members of the business community, City and County governments, the local School Board, and social service agencies. The committee helped draft the proposal which was submitted to the Casey Foundation on January 15, 1988 and led to the grant award. The proposed \$30 million program was partially funded with the \$10 million grant, \$10.5 million from the City, and a \$500,000 commitment from the United Way. The New Futures program was implemented through a fifteen member Youth Futures Authority, created by the General Assembly, which laid the groundwork for New Futures programs for the 1988-1989 school year. Alderman Dr. Otis Johnson relinquished his seat on City Council to become first Executive Director of the Youth Futures Authority.**

In the fall of 1988, City Council participated in its first strategic planning retreat, in an effort to establish a unified and common vision for Savannah, and set specific goals to make that vision a

---

<sup>36</sup> "1987 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1987, MRL; "1988 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1988, MRL.

reality. The vision would become the basis of future programs and projects of the City.

The Public Information Office received a Gold Addy Award from the Savannah Advertising Club for the City's United Way Video Production and earned a Silver Addy for the publishing and distribution of the 1987 Annual Report.

After preservation work, the Forsyth Park fountain was reinstalled in October with lights added to illuminate it at night. The renovation/preservation of the fountain earned the City and the Signatures of Savannah (SOS) Committee (who raised contributions) an award from the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

Groundbreaking for the new Vietnam Memorial in Emmet Park on East Bay Street was held on Memorial Day.

The Lincoln Street Recreation Center was opened to serve disabled and elderly, as well as the neighborhood residents, in a renovated building.

City Council voted to lease Bacon Park Golf Course to the American Golf Corporation for five years to help reduce the City's operating expenses of the course.

In March 1988, after two years and more than \$500,000 in reconstruction, Daffin Park Lake was officially re-dedicated.

The Council approved a \$300,000 loan to the Lucas Theatre for the Arts, Inc. at 0% interest for an extensive restoration project.

The City continued to administer CDBG funds to businesses along the Waters Avenue corridor to fund new sidewalks, trash cans, and facade improvements.

In 1988, the City of Savannah was selected as a Pacesetter Organization by the United Way to set an example for the rest of the community by making early contributions. City employees donated more than \$110,000 during the campaign.

Implementation of the "Serving Savannah" program began to insure that the City was meeting needs of its citizens through audits of customer services, revisions of service standards, customer service training for all City employees, and an automated telephone information system.

The City launched the "Get in Stride with Community Pride" project which included clean-ups, the "Loan-a-Tool" program, bus tours, and neighborhood meetings. School kids were introduced to the mascots of Clean Dean and Clean Gene as part of the outreach effort.

In March 1987, the City launched the Neighborhood Services Program (NSP). The focus of NSP was to involve residents in the planning and care of their own neighborhoods and establish the City as a partner rather than as a provider. The initial target area was established in the Eastside neighborhood and labeled as Showcase Area I. Block clubs were organized and neighborhood conditions surveys conducted by residents. Showcase Area II, established on the westside, had its own unique issues and problems to address.

The Police Department was accredited by the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), becoming one of only 110 (out of approximately 40,000) law enforcement agencies in the country with the honor. Accreditation increased the overall professionalism of department, improved management procedures, police reputation and morale, and assured efficient use of police resources.

The Savannah Police Horse Patrol was established in April, with mounted officers patrolling the Historic District and public housing areas seven days a week.

#### **1989<sup>37</sup>**

Savannah celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City government.

Implementation of P.O.P. (Problem-Oriented Policing), a crime analysis program used in developing crime control and prevention strategies in specific neighborhoods, included the establishment of Savannah Police Department mini-stations in target areas.

In January, the City established the Yamacraw Village Youth Sports Club with a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The pilot program would be the basis of expanding into other public housing communities.

As part of the Youth Futures Authority, the City opened two after-school centers and initiated a summer youth program.

**City Council adopted a comprehensive tree ordinance designed to protect the city's inventory of more than 200,000 trees and ensure the preservation of the urban forest.**

In March, West Broad Street was renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. After much debate, the City Council chose West Broad Street rather than 37<sup>th</sup> Street due to its historic significance to the heritage of Savannah's African American citizens and its role in the local civil rights movement.

---

<sup>37</sup> "1989 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1989, MRL.

Following Hurricane Hugo, the City aided coastal South Carolina communities with volunteers, equipment, food and supplies.

**1990<sup>38</sup>**

The Central of Georgia Roundhouse reopened in February under a City contract with the Coastal Heritage Society to establish a railroad museum on the site.

In September, Savannah was chosen as the site of the Olympic yachting competition to be held in 1996.

The Small Business Assistance Corporation (SBAC), established in 1989, provided businesses with technical assistance and loan services in its first full year of operation.

Four additional neighborhoods were added to the Showcase Program, representing a large portion of Savannah's westside. The City's Showcase Program won several national awards, including one in June 1991 from the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The City began the pilot Urban Homestead program in 1990 through which low income families were awarded properties and became first-time homeowners. The City obtained houses from HUD and then held a drawing for the "Dollar House Program" enabling homesteaders who agreed to rehabilitate, maintain and occupy the homes for five years to buy vacant homes for only one dollar.

The new Nuisance Property Abatement Program empowered the City to take action against negligent property owners who refused to take responsibility for their dilapidated buildings.

In 1970 there were more than 120 miles of unpaved streets within in City limits, by the end of 1990 this number had been reduced to less than 30 miles.

**The City adopted a \$37 million drainage improvement program. The largest components of the five-year program were the North Casey Canal and the South Casey Canal.**

---

<sup>38</sup> "1989 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1989, MRL; "1990 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1990, MRL.

1991<sup>39</sup>

In the spring, City Council adopted the Beach Institute Urban Redevelopment Program.

The Chatham-Savannah Youth Service Corps was established as part of the New Futures Program to help youth ages 17-24 learn job skills, to lead to future employment.

**The City's Annual Report was presented to the public in three parts for first time: a print edition of the "City of Savannah Citizens' Report" was distributed through the *WTOC News Leader*; ninety-second reports aired on the WTOC nightly news during the week; and a thirty-minute presentation aired on WTOC on a Friday evening.**

The Mayor's Institute on Urban Design and City Planning was instituted to encourage everyone to participate in the planning process for the future of Broughton Street.

The City's Broughton Street Municipal Building opened in January, helping draw more citizens to Broughton Street on a daily basis.

The Police Department was reorganized and a new anti-crime strategy. The \$2.5 million Crime Control Program, was implemented, including the establishment of four precincts to serve different areas of the city. The precincts help identify unique problems and conditions within each precinct and helped develop specific strategies aimed at solving those problems. Introduction of Community-Oriented Policing helped remove the traditional barriers between law enforcement and the public, as did the establishment of a Bike Patrol.

Through the City's Nuisance Abatement Program, 648 nuisance buildings were either rehabilitated, secured or demolished during 1991.

The Showcase Neighborhood Center on Waters Avenue (in the old Romana Riley School building) opened to provide a place for neighborhood activities and house the Chatham-Savannah Youth Service Corps.

The City's Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Bacon Park was completed.

The Great Savannah Exposition was renamed the Savannah History Museum.

City Council lent \$300,000 to the Lucas Theatre for the Arts to assist in the acquisition of the historic Lucas Theatre on Abercorn Street.

---

<sup>39</sup> "1990 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1990, MRL; "1991 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1991, MRL.



**1992<sup>40</sup>**

Susan Weiner was inaugurated as Savannah's new mayor.

The City was awarded \$6 million in State funds for preparations in anticipation of the 1996 Olympics.

**City Council approved \$200,000 in the 1993 budget for Broughton Street and downtown revitalization, including the establishment of the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA). SDRA was created by the State Legislature and members were appointed by City Council.**

Construction of the North Casey Canal drainage improvement program began.

State funding of \$6.4 million for a gateway beautification project was approved, and work began in 1993.

A citizen volunteer group, to assist the Police Department in clerical and support duties, was suggested by Mayor Weiner and implemented. The Police Department later began the Citizens Police Academy to further the concept of Community Oriented Policing.

**1993<sup>41</sup>**

The Olympic flag was welcomed to Savannah with a parade.

**Roger Pack was the first recipient of a house, on East Jones Street, through the housing program sponsored by the City and the Community Housing Services Agency. The aim of the rent-to-own program was to provide low-cost, single-family homes to formerly homeless individuals and families. The State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless awarded the City a \$200,000 loan to assist the program. (Staff photo by John Carrington, "First Recipient of Renovated Housing Welcomed Into His Rent-to-Own Home," SMN (27 Mar 1993), 1c:2.)**

---

<sup>40</sup> "1992 Annual Report," SAV.CM.01-1992, MRL; Amy A. Swann, "Weiner Earns Mixed, Mostly Positive Marks," VF-Savannah-Politics and Government, 1990-1999, CELB.

<sup>41</sup> "'92 Review," SMN (1 Jan 1993), 1D:1; Donald V. Adderton, "First Recipient of Renovated Housing Welcomed Into His Rent-to-Own Home," SMN (27 Mar 1993), 1C:2.

**1994<sup>42</sup>**

The City and County agreed on a plan for a county-wide drug squad to mount a concentrated attack on the local narcotics trade.

Don Mendonsa ended a twenty-eight-year career as Savannah's city manager.

A new downtown Kroger was built in the Victorian District, with a brick facade loosely based on the design of the old City Market (demolished).

Chatham County Commissioners approved the location of a new Georgia International Maritime and Trade Center on Hutchinson Island, across the Savannah River from River Street.

In October, City Council voted unanimously to hire Columbus, Georgia City Manager Michael Brown, former Savannah Assistant City Manager, to replace the retiring Mendonsa.

**An award of \$3.1 million in Federal funds was granted to be shared by the City and the County Health Department on a partnership basis, and spent over a two-year period, to remove lead paint in housing, primarily north of Victory Drive.**

**1995<sup>43</sup>**

**Former alderman Floyd Adams, Jr. is elected Savannah's first African American mayor in an historic mayoral race.**

Julie Tolbert was promoted as the first female captain in the Savannah Police Department.

John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* and "Forrest Gump," starring Tom Hanks, continued to increase tourism in Savannah and promote the booming film industry.

A Savannah Police Department lieutenant was awarded one of four National P.O.P. (Problem Oriented Policing) awards in 1995.

---

<sup>42</sup> Larry Peterson, "Big Chill Ranks As Biggest '93 Story," SMN (1 Jan 1994, 1D:1); Amy A. Swann, "Mendonsa Leaving Legacy After 28 Years," SMN (31 Dec 1994), 1A:3; "Year in Review," SNP (1 Jan 1995), 10C:1; Brad Swope, "City Gets Grant To Remove Lead Paint," SNP (29 Oct 1994), F1:1.

<sup>43</sup> "First Black Mayor Tops News of Year," SMN (31 Dec 1995), 1C:2; "SPD Accomplishments," (n.d.), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL.

#### 1996<sup>44</sup>

Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr. was inaugurated in January (Staff photo by John Carrington, "The Year in Review," SMN (29 Dec 1996), 6C:1).

Savannah began the buy out of flood ravaged homes along Baker Street and accelerated the City's drainage program in March. Groundbreaking of a new pump station in December promised to alleviate Savannah's flooding problems.

**The Chatham-Savannah Counter Narcotics Team made more than 1,100 drug arrests in its first two years of operation, with a 99% conviction rate for all completed cases.**

After years of planning, the groundbreaking of the Georgia International Maritime and Trade Center, a 345,000 square foot facility, was held in December. The concept for a trade center originated in the 1980s with the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce. The planning represented work of the City, County, State, and numerous local organizations and individuals. (Staff photo by John Carrington, "Groundbreaking Ends Months of Delays," SMN (31 Dec 1996), 1C:2)

The City received Certified Local Government Status making it eligible to receive technical assistance and funding from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Division.

Some of the 1996 Summer Olympic events were held in the Savannah area.

#### 1997<sup>45</sup>

In June, voters approved a five-year extension of the 1% special purpose sales tax, thereby earmarking \$145.9 million for drainage improvements.

(File photo, "Resegregation, 'Midnight,' Dominated the Headlines," SMN (28 Dec 1997), 1C:2)

City Council approved a redevelopment plan for the Cuyler-Brownsville neighborhood.

A new Information Management Bureau of the Police Department was created to centralize

---

<sup>44</sup> "The Year in Review," SMN (29 Dec 1996), 6C:1; "Six for '96, An Agenda for the Year," SMN (2 Jan 1996), 1A:1; Brad Swope, "Groundbreaking Ends Months of Delays," SMN (31 Dec 1996), 1C:2; "Memo from Beth Reiter re. Preservation Lecture," (2 Feb 1998), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL.

<sup>45</sup> "Resegregation, 'Midnight,' Dominated the Headlines," SMN (28 Dec 1997), 1C:2; "SPD Accomplishments," (n.d.), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL; "Memo from Beth Reiter re. Preservation Lecture," (2 Feb 1998), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL.

functions related to information, records, communications and technological enhancements.

**The Metropolitan Planning Commission updated the City's 1968 "Historic Preservation Plan" regulations with a new focus on compatibility criteria based on Savannah's historic Oglethorpe Plan.**

**1998<sup>46</sup>**

**Savannah was awarded a \$1 million Federal grant from the Federal Housing and Urban Development Department, and borrowed \$3 million more, for a small-business loan program and other programs aimed at revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods. Mayor Adams accepted the check in person from vice-president Al Gore in Washington, D.C. Under the loan plan, potential business owners could qualify for loans ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. \$2 million was used to establish and operate a "business incubator" for three years.**

In November, after two years of debate, City Council approved an ordinance to accommodate and control tourism downtown through the "tour bus treaty," limiting the number of tour buses on any one square at the same time.

Savannah was chosen as the site of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Preservation Conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The City, Historic Savannah Foundation, and the Savannah Junior League sponsored scholarships for several locals to attend the conference, which focused on how historic preservation and the arts can collaborate in landmark restoration.

The City finished a \$34,350 restoration of the Armillary Sphere in Troup Square.

The Police Department's Communications Center was renovated and a state-of-the-art 800MHz trunked radio system was established.

---

<sup>46</sup> Sharon Wright, "City Gets \$4 Million Economic Development Grant," SMN (26 Nov 1998), web posted, <http://www.savannahnow.com>; "Editorial: Tour Bus Treaty," SMN (9 Nov 1998), web posted, <http://www.savannahnow.com>; Sharon Wright, "City Prepares for Historic Conference," SMN (18 Oct 1998), web posted, <http://www.savannahnow.com>; Sharon Wright, "Cash Shortage Stalls Monument Restorations," SMN (26 Aug 1998), web posted, <http://www.savannahnow.com>; "SPD Accomplishments," (n.d.), City Manager Files-Speeches, 1998, Box 0120-001-252, MRL.

**1999<sup>47</sup>**

**On January 1, the City terminated the \$1.5 million contract for Southside fire coverage and brought the area under the City's Fire Department after seventeen years of privatization, at a substantial savings to the government.**

The Police Department was restructured to require officers to maintain a high presence on beats, including attending neighborhood association meetings.

A five-million gallon facility was added to water system on the Southside, behind the Eisenhower Drive Fire Station.

A \$4 million project placed cameras at six of the city's most traveled intersections, allowing traffic engineers to adjust timing on traffic signals and dispatch emergency crews to accident scenes.

---

<sup>47</sup> Sharon Wright, "City Manager Notes Southside Savannah Has Better Infrastructure. . .," SMN (3 Dec 1998), web posted, <http://savannahnow.com>.

